1. Framing the Challenge

Summary

- The Government's Chief Commercial Officer, Gareth Rhys Williams, offered to lead the Ventilator Challenge, given his procurement role and expertise as well as his private sector engineering background. Starting on Friday 13 March, a number of experienced medical device design consultancies were approached to understand the feasibility of the plan in the time available. These companies included PA Consulting, TTP, TEAM Consulting, Sagentia, and Cambridge Design Partners. Discussions over the weekend of 14/15 March between Ministers, Officials and these companies suggested that the goal to manufacture safe and effective ventilators at pace was achievable.

- PA Consulting has assisted the Cabinet Office to rapidly mobilise the project, providing project management, communications and logistics support as well as technical expertise.

- On 16 March the PM issued a 'call to arms' to British industry to help manufacture significant numbers of ventilators for the NHS. The respondees to the call were a mix of large UK-based manufacturers and medical device specialist businesses chosen for their expertise. The aims of the PM's call were;
    - To seek support from manufacturers and industry to produce as many ventilation devices for the NHS as possible, starting delivery within the next two weeks if viable;
    - To warm industry up to future calls to action to support the Government and the NHS; and
    - To provide the contact details to companies wanting to help with this call to action.

Offers of support

- Following the PM's call on 16 March, the government received over 5,300 offers of support from businesses between 16 March to 8 May from across the country through a dedicated mailbox and a webform hosted by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy. https://www.gov.uk/government/news/production-and-supply-of-ventilators-and-ventilator-components

- In order to handle this significant amount of information, and ensure that genuine, useful offers were identified and followed up as soon as possible, CO tasked PA consulting to process, triage and catalogue the offers.