



Department
of Health &
Social Care

Dame Meg Hillier MP
Chair of Public Accounts Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 9NA
Sent via email to: pubaccom@parliament.uk

39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU
permanent.secretary@dhsc.gov.uk

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Dear Chair

COVID-19 Vaccine Liabilities: spring programme and Sanofi/GSK

I am writing to update you on the contingent liabilities relating to the COVID-19 vaccine programme. You will be aware that as part of the contractual arrangements with COVID-19 vaccine producers, manufacturers were provided with indemnities from His Majesty's Government (HMG) on signing their supply agreements. Given the exceptional circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic and the terms on which developers have been willing to supply a COVID-19 vaccine, we have had to take a broader approach to indemnification than we usually would. Willingness to accept appropriate indemnities has helped to secure access to COVID-19 vaccines for the UK with the expected benefits to public health and the economy much sooner than may have been the case otherwise.

We have so far informed you of the:

- indemnities arising from deployment of the Pfizer/BioNTech, AstraZeneca/Oxford and Moderna vaccines, in line with advice from the independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) for Phase One and Phase Two of the vaccination programme;
- potential indemnities in relation to the Janssen vaccine, were that to be deployed;
- liabilities relating to third primary doses for severely immunosuppressed individuals;
- liabilities relating to the vaccination of certain children and young people between 5 to 17 years of age as advised by the JCVI and the four UK Chief Medical Officers;
- liabilities arising from the deployment and expansion of the COVID-19 booster vaccination programme;
- updated methodology used to calculate the liability estimates for COVID-19 vaccine indemnities;



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- liabilities relating to the universal offer of a primary course of vaccination to those aged 5-11 and the spring booster programme;
- liabilities relating to the autumn 2022 COVID-19 vaccine programme (bivalent vaccines) and deployment of Nuvaxovid vaccines; and

On the 27 January, the independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) published interim advice on the COVID-19 vaccination programme for 2023. The JCVI has now provided final advice on COVID-19 vaccinations in spring 2023. The JCVI advises that an extra booster vaccine dose in spring 2023 should be offered to:

- adults aged 75 years and over, and residents in a care home for older adults, and
- individuals aged 5 years and over who are immunosuppressed, as defined in tables 3 or 4 in chapter 14a of the UK Health Security Agency's (UKHSA) Green Book.

The JCVI recommends that the following vaccines are offered to these groups:

- Pfizer-BioNTech mRNA (Comirnaty)
- Moderna mRNA (Spikevax)
- Sanofi/GSK (only to adults 75 years and over)
- Novavax (may be used as a booster dose for persons aged 12 years and above when alternative products are considered not clinically suitable.)

On 20 December 2022, the Sanofi/GSK COVID-19 vaccine, VidPrevtyn Beta, was authorised by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) after it generated appropriate data to demonstrate quality, safety and efficacy. The JCVI has provided deployment advice on VidPrevtyn Beta as part of the spring booster 2023 programme advice.

The associated liability is set out in the confidential annex attached.

Ministers will be notifying Parliament with a Written Ministerial Statement and Departmental Minute in relation to increased contingent liability associated with the 2023 spring booster programme and Sanofi/GSK indemnity. These will be laid in Parliament at least 14 sitting days before deployment to this group, which is expected to begin at the end of March.

If the contingent liability is called, provision for any payment will be sought through the normal Supply procedure.

If, during the period of fourteen parliamentary sitting days beginning on the date on which this letter is received the chair signifies an objection in writing, final approval to proceed with establishing the liability will be withheld pending an examination of the objection.

From the Permanent Secretary
Sir Chris Wormald



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We are writing in equivalent terms to Rt Hon Steve Brine MP as Chair of the Health and Social Care Select Committee. We are also copying this letter to Gareth Davies, Comptroller and Auditor General and to the Treasury Officer of Accounts.

Yours sincerely,

Chris

W Wormald

SIR CHRIS WORMALD
PERMANENT SECRETARY