



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

Dame Meg Hillier MP  
Chair of Public Accounts Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 9NA

39 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0EU  
[permanent.secretary@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:permanent.secretary@dhsc.gov.uk)

Sent via email to: [pubaccom@parliament.uk](mailto:pubaccom@parliament.uk)

16 March 2023

Dear Chair

**Sixth report 2022–23 Department of Health and Social Care 2020-21 Annual Report and Accounts**

I am writing to the Committee to provide an update on the following recommendation of the above [report](#).

*Recommendation 3: "The Department should develop a clear plan to increase the resilience of the NHS supply chain to be able to respond at speed if there is another pandemic or variant of concern and needs to explain in detail to the Committee how it intends to work out what items and how much PPE it needs to hold as a national stockpile going forward."*

An established clinical countermeasures programme is a core component of the Department's pandemic preparedness and response capability. These clinical countermeasures include, but are not limited to, personal protective equipment (PPE) and hygiene consumables. As previously updated, the Department sought expert clinical and scientific advice and has confirmed the appropriate PPE and hygiene consumable ensemble that is needed to support our future resilience and ability to respond to a range of pandemic and emerging infectious disease scenarios.

At the start of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the then Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Programme (PIPP) PPE stockpile was rapidly utilised. In autumn 2020, it was agreed that the COVID-19 PPE Cell's PPE and hygiene consumable stocks would cover demand for both the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and a concurrent pandemic should it have occurred. From 1 April 2023, the department is re-establishing a stand-alone Pandemic Preparedness stockpile using excess PPE stock from COVID-19 procurements where appropriate and additional procurements where necessary.

*From the Permanent Secretary  
Sir Chris Wormald*



**Department  
of Health &  
Social Care**

In the medium term, the clinical countermeasures programme will continue to review the appropriate volumes of each PPE product that will need to be readily accessible, informed by scientific and clinical assessment of the evidence base, ensuring cost-effectiveness and building on lessons learned from previous outbreaks.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Wormald', written in a cursive style.

**SIR CHRIS WORMALD  
PERMANENT SECRETARY**