



PACAC (Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee)

House of Commons · London SW1A 0AA

Tel 020 7219 3268 Email pacac@parliament.uk Website www.parliament.uk/pacac

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office
by email

18th May 2020

Dear Michael,

Thank you for your letter of 9th May, in reply to my letter following up your 29th April appearance before the Committee. I was grateful for the responses you were able to make in that time, but would like to press you on some other points which are important to the Committee, and for the ongoing scrutiny of the Government's response to Coronavirus.

I am grateful to you for your explanations to date of the arrangements for how the Covid-19 pandemic response has been organised within Government. I think that for transparency and clarity, it would be useful to see this in an organisational chart (or other diagrammatic form) as soon as possible because the operation of the workings of Government is often unclear from the outside. I look forward to your review of whether further information from the Daily Dashboard can be published.

In addition, you are still to respond on the following points from my original letter:

- A detailed response on what "teeth" the Civil Contingencies Secretariat has, including pointing to legislation where appropriate (Q204).
- Detail on why the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) was not used instead of the new Coronavirus Act (Q215-9).
- A copy of the published 2019 National Risk Register (Q222-4).
- Whether, or not, the Cabinet Office had carried out checks on whether different Departments had robust plans for the contingency (Q233-4).
- Whether the lessons learned report from Exercise Cygnus could be put into the public domain. (Q235-7).
- The exact status of the Clipper service (Q254).
- Whether the NERVTAG recommendations had been achieved and implemented (that gowns needing to be purchased would fully meet infection control guidance and also be body-fluid repellent as a minimum standard) (Q286).

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In addition, you agreed to take forward two issues with Cabinet colleagues:

- Discussing with the Secretaries of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and for Housing, Communities and Local Government how the Government can make sure that it is properly “rural proofing” its response to Covid-19 (Q199); and
- Checking in with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care about what the two-monthly report required under s97 of the Coronavirus Act (Q269).

I would be grateful for a response to this letter before the House rises for the Whitsun recess. I shall place this letter, and your reply, in the public domain.

Yours ever


William Wragg MP

Chair, Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee