

The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP
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Dear Secretary of State,

Congratulations on your new role as Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. I hope this can signal a new chapter in the UK's pandemic preparedness and management.

Like you, I'm a second-generation British Pakistani and I've seen the sacrifices made by Black and Asian immigrants who contributed so much to the British economy and have been hit so hard by COVID-19. My father arrived in the UK in the 1960s and worked in a factory in Manchester and then lifting sacks of mail in the Post Office. Thanks to those sacrifices, I'm now an NHS hospital consultant, with a background in law, the IT industry and scientific research.

British ministers have rightly emphasised the importance of following the science since this pandemic started. The world has faced a series of novel viral pandemics during the last 20 years, and we have no way of knowing if the next major pandemic will be an influenza, a coronavirus, a viral haemorrhagic fever, or a flavivirus. Logically, we must therefore develop a new paradigm of transparency for data harvested from the UK's pandemic exercises, in the absence of a defined unequivocal risk to national security.

Last year I requested Judicial Review of the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)'s refusal to disclose the report from Exercise Cygnus. I'm glad to say that the DHSC subsequently published the Cygnus Report. I've also secured a recent decision by the Information Commissioner's Office against the DHSC, ordering disclosure of pandemic triage papers, and a decision order against NHS England. My legal representatives at Leigh Day Solicitors have now submitted legal arguments against Public Health England, which I believe is resisting disclosure of the Typhon Report on the basis of policy set by the DHSC. We intend to seek disclosure of the reports from Exercise Alice, Exercise Broad St, Exercise Cerberus and Exercise Pica.

We have all made immense sacrifices during the COVID-19 pandemic – we deserve to see the data. More importantly, effective scientific management of pandemics requires data transparency and peer review. I invite you to work with our campaign for pandemic transparency and open a new chapter of information democracy in the Department of Health's relationship with the British public, NHS healthcare professionals and the scientific community.

Yours sincerely,

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