30 May 2019

Dr Sarah Wollaston MP  
Chair  
Health and Social Care Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Dear Dr Wollaston,

I understand that you would like a further progress report on our appraisals of cystic fibrosis drugs developed by Vertex.

We have contributed to two meetings with NHS England and Vertex since the Select Committee’s hearing on 7 March 2019, during which we listened to the company’s views about our appraisal methods and discussed further the original offer from NHS England. We have fully explored with the company the extent and nature of the flexibility in our appraisal methods that we are able to offer for their treatments.

We have also undertaken preparatory work for several licence extensions for ivacaftor (Kalydeco), lumacaftor/ivacaftor (Orkambi), and tezacaftor/ivacaftor (Symkevi), and for the triple therapy, in anticipation of their referral to us. The company have not so far taken the opportunity to participate in this process, although it has provided us with an overview of the clinical evidence available for the licensed medicines in cystic fibrosis, including evidence we have not previously seen. It is helpful to see this new information, but we do need the company to engage fully with us if we are to take advantage of it and complete our appraisals of their products.

We are aware that NHS England has made a further offer to the company, to which we very much hope they will make a positive response. We stand ready to support them in doing so.

Yours sincerely,

Sir Andrew Dillon  
Chief executive