



Department
of Health &
Social Care

*From the Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care*

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The Rt Hon Norman Lamb MP
Chair, Science and Technology Committee
House of Commons
Westminster
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28 SEP 2018

Dear Norman

Thank you for your letter of 12 September 2018 regarding the Eighth session of the Conference of the Parties (CoP) to the World Health Organisation Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) in Geneva.

May I first of all thank you for your Committee's Report on e-cigarettes and the important contribution it makes to the wider debate on e-cigarettes. The Government will of course respond formally to the report through a Command paper in due course.

With regard to the forthcoming CoP, I think it would be helpful if I said a little about the UK's plans for this. As a world leader in tobacco control the UK has been a highly active participant in the WHO FCTC and successive CoPs. Officials from my Department and from the UK's Permanent Representation to the European Union will be attending. The UK will continue to support measures proposed at CoP to reduce global harms from tobacco and ensure any WHO FCTC secretariat work proposals offer value for money. The officials are reviewing the published papers in preparation for the meeting, and as is customary we will set out UK positions on the matters to be considered work in reaching a common position across the European Union (EU).

We support proportionate regulation of e-cigarettes to ensure non-smokers and children are protected from accessing these products and we have implemented the EU Tobacco Products Directive accordingly. As you will understand I cannot, nor can my officials, go into detail on negotiations but I can reiterate that our commitment to a proportionate approach to harm reduction, as set out in the Tobacco Control Plan published last year, remains. We are also determined to maximise the potential for using e-cigarettes for smoking cessation.

I hope this reply is helpful in reassuring you that the UK will continue to promote a proportionate approach to harm reduction with regard to tobacco control and the regulation of e-cigarettes. In the circumstances I do not think a meeting with my officials is necessary, but I am happy to provide a report back from the CoP, should you find that helpful.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt", written in a cursive style.

MATT HANCOCK