From Rt Hon Norman Lamb MP, Chair

Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP
Secretary of State for Health & Social Care
Department of Health & Social Care
39 Victoria Street
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27 February 2019

Dear Matt,

Wearable Technologies

You may be aware that the Science and Technology Committee ran its “My Science Inquiry” initiative in January. This was an open opportunity for the science community, and the wider public, to suggest science and technology areas for scrutiny. We received 86 submissions of which 10 were shortlisted and invited to pitch their idea to us, in person, in Westminster.

One of the people we heard from was Dr Jyotsna Vohra, Head of the Cancer Policy Research Centre at Cancer Research UK. Dr Vohra told us about the potential for wearable technologies, like ‘Fitbit’, to encourage lifestyle changes and reduce behaviours that lead to obesity and the many preventable diseases associated with this, including thirteen types of cancer. Dr Vohra also called attention to the data collected by the wearable technologies and apps, and the potential to use this data to understand more about ‘what works’ – for example – in reducing obesity among different demographics.

Last year, the Prime Minister announced a ‘Mission’ to use data, artificial intelligence and innovation to transform the prevention, early diagnosis and treatment of chronic diseases by 2030. I would be grateful if you could write to us, setting out what work the Department of Health and Social Care is undertaking on the use of wearable technologies to reduce behaviours that lead to preventable conditions, as part of this Mission. If possible, I would be grateful to receive your reply by Friday 15 March.

Rt Hon Norman Lamb MP
Chair