



Department
of Health &
Social Care

*From the Lord Kamall
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Innovation (Lords)*

*39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU*

PO-1406153

The Rt Hon Sir George Howarth MP
By email to: george.howarth.mp@parliament.uk

8 June 2022

Dear Sir George,

Thank you for your correspondence of 20 May to Sajid Javid on behalf of your constituent, , about the World Health Organization (WHO).

I am grateful to you for raising concerns.

COVID-19 has demonstrated that no one is safe until we are all safe, and that a truly global solution is needed to better protect the UK and the world from the detrimental impacts of pandemics and other health threats. The UK therefore supports a new legally binding instrument as part of a comprehensive approach to pandemic prevention, preparedness and response.

At a World Health Assembly special session in December, WHO member states agreed to launch a process to draft and negotiate a WHO convention, agreement or other international instrument on tackling pandemics. The instrument will be designed to improve global performance in preventing, preparing for and responding to future disease outbreaks of pandemic potential, at a national, regional and global level.

As the leading global health agency, the WHO is the clear institutional home for a legally binding agreement. The UK is party to a large number of multilateral treaties, including many through the United Nations and its specialised agencies, including the WHO. Through these treaties, the UK and other member states have agreed common standards and made commitments to each other, and in many cases have provided for international organisations themselves to assist with and monitor implementation of those treaties. However, Parliament's role in the UK remains undiminished and any treaty will not hand over the governance of health in the UK to the WHO.

I hope this reply is helpful.

LORD KAMALL