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The Rt. Hon. Nadhim Zahawi MP  
Chancellor of the Exchequer  
HM Treasury  
1 Horse Guards Road  
London  
SW1A 2HQ

28<sup>th</sup> July 2022

Dear Chancellor of the Exchequer,

Thank you very much for the regular meetings that you held with us to discuss the Covid-19 vaccine deployment programme throughout 2021 as the Minister for Vaccines, and the key role that you played in heading up this programme. We write, as charities representing patients who remain vulnerable to Covid, to appeal for your support again as Chancellor of the Exchequer.

**We ask that you work with your counterpart at the Department of Health and Social Care to ensure procurement of prophylactic monoclonal antibody therapies such as AstraZeneca's Evusheld.** We would welcome a meeting with you and your advisers to discuss this further.

As you will remember from our previous meetings, a significant number of the people we represent garner only limited known benefits from vaccination. Many cancer patients, transplant recipients, people with primary and secondary immunodeficiency, and those on immunosuppressive medications, as just illustrative examples, [remain extremely vulnerable](#) to Covid, even after vaccination. The new post-exposure therapies are helpful in these contexts. But some cannot take these drugs due to interactions with other medications, many are still shielding and some are even struggling to access medical care because of their ongoing vulnerability. The psychological distress alone for this group [is enormous](#).

Evusheld and drugs like it represent an important step forward for this group, and must be considered as part of a [broader strategy](#) for living safely with Covid. Yet, despite being [authorised by the UK's MHRA on the 17th of March 2022](#), meeting the requisite standards for safety, quality and effectiveness, the drug remains unavailable anywhere in the UK, publicly or privately. Twenty-six other countries have procured and are administering Evusheld to their vulnerable populations. The UK remains an outlier by ignoring this important treatment.

There is strong clinical support for Evusheld across a range of medical specialties. Nonetheless, we are concerned that Evusheld is being held to an impossible standard of evolving evidence. It is unclear what information and concerns the Government hold in relation to Evusheld's effectiveness, and how these relate to the delays in its procurement. Despite real-world studies showing [strong performance against Omicron BA1 and BA2](#) and [subsequent data for BA4 and](#)

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[BA5](#), there has been a lack of transparency relating to Government testing and how this will influence procurement and rollout.

There are important economic benefits of Evusheld that should be balanced against the cost. Our vulnerable members are currently extremely limited in their ability to participate in society. For many, the first lockdown of 2020 has never ended. A drug that could significantly reduce the risk of poor outcomes from Covid would have far-reaching benefits for the economy. The fact that Evusheld substantially reduces hospitalisation in this group would also have a positive impact on NHS bed space.

Covid infections are rising rapidly, emphasising the urgency of this situation for vulnerable people who feel trapped while the rest of the country returns to normal. Despite vaccination and anti-virals, this group [continues to be at higher risk of dying from Covid](#), and requires urgent protection.

We know that this is an issue close to you from your time as Vaccines Minister. We hope that you can again support the most vulnerable by helping to fund the procurement of prophylactic monoclonal antibody therapies such as Evusheld and make them available to vulnerable patients as a priority. We would like to arrange a meeting with your team to discuss this at your earliest convenience.

For your information, we have also written to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.

Yours Sincerely,

Ceinwen Giles  
*Co-Chief Executive of Shine Cancer Support*  
*Chair of the Patient and Public Voices Forum for the NHSE Cancer Programme*

Clare Jacklin  
*Chief Executive of the National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society (NRAS)*

Gemma Peters  
*Chief Executive of Blood Cancer UK*

Henny Braund  
*Chief Executive of Anthony Nolan*

Louise Wright  
*Chief Executive of Action for Pulmonary Fibrosis*

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