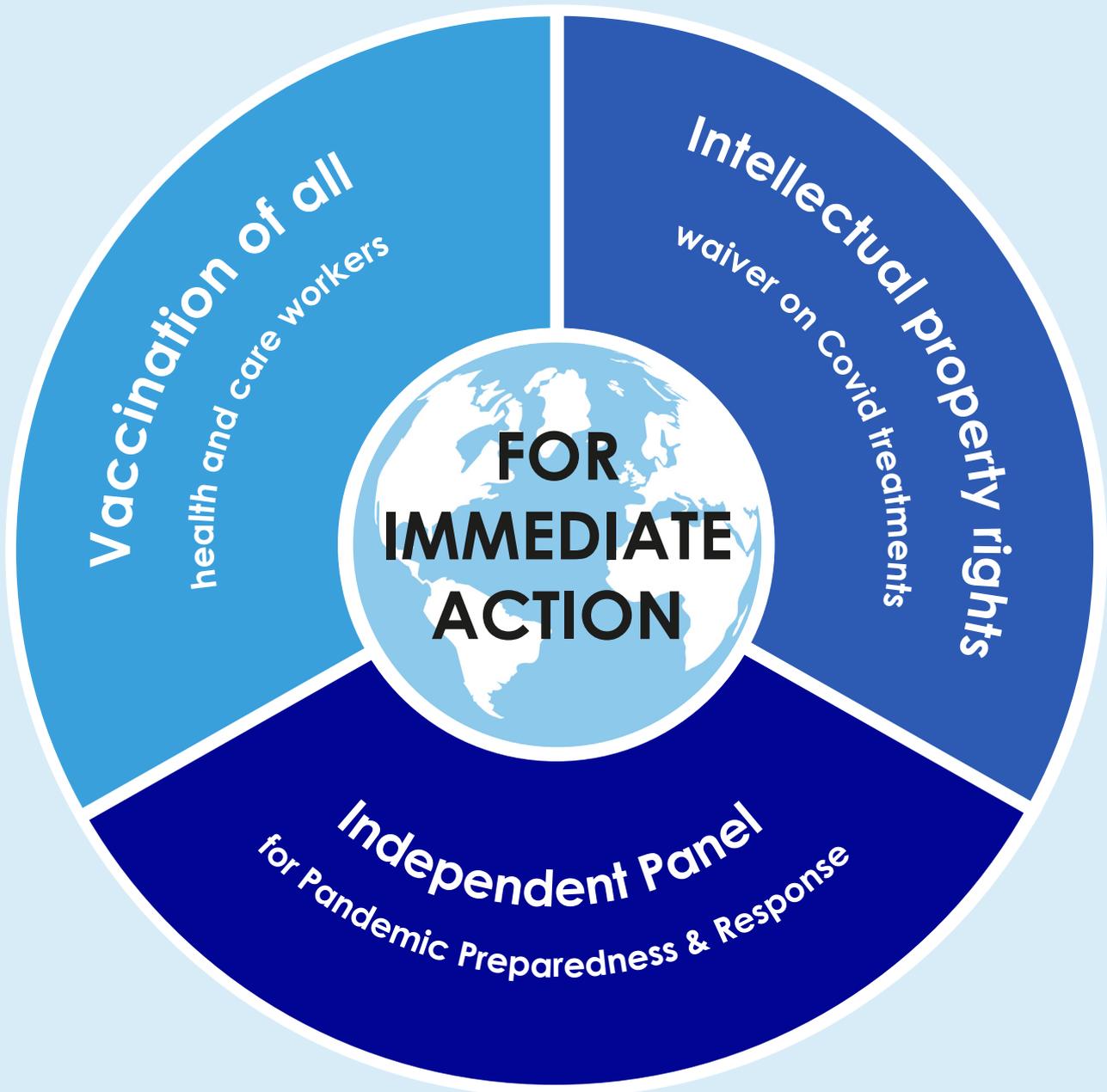




A statement by the  
All-Party Parliamentary Group on Global Health

# The UK, G7 and global health



March 2021

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The UK has the opportunity with the Presidency of G7 and the hosting of COP26 to play a leading role in shaping the global health agenda and, at the same time, define its global role post Brexit as the world starts to recover from the pandemic.

This short statement sets out the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Global Health's (APPG)<sup>i</sup> views on the UK's global role and makes recommendations about further priorities for the G7 meetings. It is based on meetings and discussions with parliamentarians and health and science leaders.

The APPG will issue a further statement in advance of the COP26 climate summit to be held in Glasgow in November.

## **The UK as a global broker**

The need for concerted multi-national action and global solidarity in the face of shared threats has never been more important. Yet, there are growing divisions within and between countries, and increasing nationalism in countries all around the world. There are also threats to freedom and democracy from over-mighty private corporations and advances in surveillance technology.

The APPG supports the view in a recent Chatham House report that the UK should embrace a new role as a global broker, working with today's major powers and economic groupings to influence global development.<sup>ii</sup> This would involve working closely with like-minded countries, strengthening existing alliances and building new ones, and reaching out to other countries everywhere to find opportunities to build trust and common purpose.

The UK is already one of the best networked countries in the world and can develop this still further – as advocated by a House of Lords Committee – building on its great cultural, language and historical links around the world.<sup>iii</sup>

## **The UK as a global centre for health and health science – a go-to place for all aspects of health globally**

Health and health science must be at the heart of the UK's future role and the APPG welcomes the Government's commitment to science described in the Integrated Review published on 16th March.

The APPG mapped out the UK's footprint in health globally in 2015 covering the four sectors of academia, commerce, government and NGOs, and demonstrated that the UK is a true leader in health globally.<sup>iv</sup> An update in 2020 called for the UK to give this role even greater priority and agreed that further planning, cross-sectoral and global collaboration, and targeted investment would enable the UK to become a truly global centre for health and health science – for the benefit of the UK and the world.<sup>v</sup>

The 2020 update stressed the importance of global partnerships and the need for greater regional development in the UK, improved data management, and strengthening of the health and scientific workforces.

# Priorities for the UK's G7 Presidency

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The APPG supports the Government's four stated global health priorities for G7: global health security; developing shared standards for and the co-ordination of clinical trials; tackling antimicrobial resistance; and promoting digital health and the use of artificial intelligence. It applauds the offer of support to all countries of access to the new UK virus variant assessment platform via the National Institute for Health Protection.

It recommends that the UK adds three further priorities for immediate practical action:

- 1.** Seeking a commitment from G7 countries, and others wherever possible, to guarantee an offer of a vaccination to all health and care workers globally by a target date of, say, July 2022.

The UK is a major financial contributor to COVAX – the World Health Organization's global coalition on vaccinations. A shared guarantee of this sort would not only demonstrate a global commitment to the health of all peoples but would also be in the interest of every country individually.

- 2.** Seeking a commitment from G7 countries and others to waive parts of the TRIPS agreement on intellectual property rights for the duration of the pandemic, as proposed by India and other countries. This waiver would prevent intellectual property barriers from restricting access to COVID-19 medicines, tools, devices and vaccines, and help ensure all countries have access to the health technologies they need to end the pandemic.

There have already been voluntary agreements for temporary waivers between, for example, Oxford University/AstraZeneca and Indian manufacturers; however, these only cover some vaccines and treatments, and a formal waiver will be needed to have the full impact on the pandemic.

- 3.** Leading a call for a stronger WHO to enhance global health security and improve global co-operation. The pandemic has demonstrated the important role of the WHO in preventing, detecting and responding to pandemics.

The UK has already provided additional funding for the WHO. It should now invite the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response, which is due to make recommendations for the reform of WHO by the end of April, to lead a session at the G7 summit.

The APPG also recommends that discussion at G7 should cover longer-term issues that underpin recovering and rebuilding, including the needs for:

- 1.** A fully integrated approach to the three great global threats of climate change, pandemics, and non-communicable diseases.
- 2.** A new focus on tackling inequalities.
- 3.** Improved data management, security, and standards.
- 4.** Investment in the education and employment of health and care workers at a time when the world faces a shortfall of at least 18 million.
- 5.** Support for the proposed Care Compact, which would set out the expectations that health and care workers globally should have of their employers and the public, in a similar fashion to the UK's Armed Forces Covenant.

# The UK's development policy

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The reduction in Overseas Development Aid (ODA) from 0.7% to 0.5% of a reduced GNP is already having a very damaging effect on some of the poorest people in the world and is badly affecting the perception of the UK globally and its ability to play a role as a trusted global broker.

The Government needs to bolster the UK's global reputation by:

1. Restoring the reduction in ODA.
2. Supporting an independent review of the way the pandemic has affected the UK. This should incorporate the learning from the WHO's Independent Panel and cover all aspects, from preparedness, communication, overall management and testing to NHS performance and vaccine development and roll-out.
3. Publishing a new global health strategy built around co-development, mutual learning and partnerships.

Addressing these issues, will enable the UK to build a new future of global influence and prosperity carefully, sustainably and successfully.

## On behalf of the APPG on Global Health

Dr Dan Poulter MP,  
Chair

18 March 2021.

Lord (Nigel) Crisp,  
Co-chair of the APPG  
on Global Health.

18 March 2021.

# References

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<sup>i</sup> <https://globalhealth.inparliament.uk>

<sup>ii</sup> Niblett R: Global Britain, Global Broker – a blueprint for the UK's future international role; Chatham House, London, January 2021, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2021/01/global-britain-global-broker>

<sup>iii</sup> House of Lords: Persuasion and Power in the Modern World, House of Lords. London, March 2014, <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201314/ldselect/ldsoftpower/150/15002.htm>

<sup>iv</sup> APPG on Global Health: The UK's Contribution to Health Globally – Benefiting the Country and the World; APPG on Global Health, London, October 2016, [www.globalhealth.inparliament](http://www.globalhealth.inparliament)

<sup>v</sup> APPG on Global Health: The UK as a Global Centre for Health and Health Science – a go-to place for all aspects of health globally; APPG on Global Health, London, February 2020, <https://globalhealth.inparliament.uk>

<sup>vi</sup> WHO: Global Strategy for Human Resources for Health; WHO, Geneva, 2016, <https://www.who.int/hrh/resources/globstrathrh-2030/en/>

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