News story: Foreign Office Minister visits BVI to review hurricane preparedness

Foreign Office Minister of State for the Overseas Territories Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon visited the British Virgin Islands between 31 July and 1 August to discuss hurricane preparedness and to see the progress on recovery since last year's hurricanes.

During his visit, the Minister visited sites affected by last year's hurricanes, including a school, a hurricane shelter, the Fire Service headquarters and a police station. He saw how UK support is helping the islands' recovery efforts, and he handed over the purpose-built temporary Court House to the Government. This new UK-funded building will allow the Supreme Court and Magistrates' Court to function fully again whilst a permanent building is constructed.

Lord Ahmad visited RFA Mounts Bay, which will remain in the region throughout the hurricane season to provide rapid assistance to Caribbean islands if needed. He also met the board of the Recovery and Development Agency to hear how they plan to implement further vital recovery work.

Foreign Office Minister of State for the Overseas Territories, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon said:

> The UK has played a crucial role in assisting the region to recover from last year's unprecedented and devastating hurricanes, providing aid and support to help British Overseas Territories.
>
> However, there is still more to be done before the islands fully recover and the UK stands ready to help. We are working with partners across the Caribbean to make sure that plans are being put in place to prepare for future hurricanes.

Lord Ahmad held talks with Premier Orlando Smith and the Cabinet to discuss their concerns about the UK's Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act as well as meeting members of the financial services industry to hear their views. The Minister also met with business and tourism representatives during his visit.

This visit to BVI follows an earlier tour of the region by the Minister in May to the Cayman Islands, Montserrat and Anguilla.

Further information

- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter @foreignoffice and Facebook

- Follow Foreign Office Minister Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on Twitter @tariqahmadbt

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News story: Important information for DVLA customers: DVLA services

This means you will not be able to tax your vehicle online, by phone or at the Post Office. Vehicle tax is for the whole month, so if your tax will expire at the end of this month you'll still have time to tax your car when the service is back to normal on Monday morning.

Not all services are affected and you'll still be able to view and share your driving licence details with third parties including car hire companies. To avoid any disappointment it's best to generate a check code now as the codes are valid for 21 days. You can also renew your ten year photocard driving licence at the Post Office.

Remember, it's against the law to drive an untaxed vehicle on the road. If you buy a car during this weekend you won't be able to tax it until 6am on Monday 20 August.

We're sorry for any inconvenience that this may cause. Follow us on Twitter or Facebook for the most up to date information.

News story: Veterinary medicines –

information about market access during the implementation period following EU exit

The joint guidance published on 6 August outlines what it would mean for market access for medicines during the implementation period, including; licensing and packaging, batch release and testing, and the UK regulatory role.

It also covers other points relating to medicines and implementation plans related to EU legislation during the implementation period.

News story: Clinical Trials Regulation

As part of exit negotiations, MHRA is working to ensure that we continue to have the best possible environment in which to support clinical trials. Our overall aim is to ensure that patients in the UK and across the EU continue to be able to access the best and most innovative medicines.

In March, the UK and EU negotiating teams reached agreement on the terms of an implementation period that will start on 30 March 2019 and last until 31 December 2020. During this time, the UK will no longer be a Member State of the European Union, but market access will continue on current terms – and the UK and the EU have agreed that EU rules and regulations will remain in place in order to provide continuity and certainty to businesses and citizens.

The EU's new Clinical Trials Regulation (CTR) specifically is expected to be implemented during 2020 and would therefore apply to the UK under the terms of the time-limited implementation period. The new regulation is a major step forward: it will enable a streamlined application process, harmonised assessment procedure, a single portal for all EU clinical trials and simplified reporting procedures, including for multi-Member State trials. The UK was involved in developing the new regulation that has been widely welcomed by Europe's research sector, including academia, medical research charities and industry.

However, if the new regulation does not come into force during the implementation period, the Government has confirmed that UK law will remain aligned with parts of the EU's CTR legislation that are within the UK's control, in order that researchers conducting clinical trials can plan with greater certainty. The UK's access to networks, information systems and databases will continue on current terms for the duration of the

implementation period. The two key elements of the regulation that the UK would not be able to implement on its own after this time are the use of a shared central IT portal and participation in the single assessment model, both of which would require a negotiated UK/EU agreement regarding UK involvement following the end of the implementation period. We cannot pre-empt the outcome of these negotiations, but the Government has always been clear on its preference for close cooperation with the EU across all aspects of medicines regulations.

It is in the interest of patients and the Life Sciences industry internationally for the UK and EU to find a way to continue cooperation in the field of clinical trials, and for continued sharing of data, even if our precise relationship with the EU will by necessity change.

No matter what the outcome of negotiations, the UK is committed to offering a competitive service for clinical trial assessment.

If the UK is outside of the EU network following the end of the implementation period, it will still be possible for sponsors to run multistate trials involving the UK. Sponsors would have to apply to MHRA, as well as to the EU concerned states; but MHRA would take every effort to ensure this parallel submission is as streamlined and efficient as possible (for example by using the same application dossier). MHRA and UK ethics committees are already internationally recognised for their robust yet timely assessment of trial applications, and the UK would provide an assessment outcome no later than the European timeframe.

The current regulatory approval legislation will stay in place until such time as any changes are needed, so there will be no interruption in UK clinical trials approval (whether for academic or industry-led clinical trials).

The UK’s commitment to offering a competitive clinical trials environment does not just cover regulatory approval from MHRA – it also covers services from the Health Research Authority (HRA), the Devolved Administrations, ethics services, National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and the NHS. For example, MHRA and the HRA, in partnership with the Devolved Administrations, have been exploring opportunities to improve services to sponsors through the Combined Ways of Working Pilot. This is testing a new process that will result in a single UK decision on a clinical trial (consisting of the current ethics opinion and MHRA clinical trial authorisation), in addition to a single clinical trial application route that incorporates both the Research Ethics Service and MHRA.

Following the agreement in March of the implementation period, work to finalise the Withdrawal Agreement as a whole is continuing – with the intention to do so by October, alongside the framework for the future partnership. The Government has always been confident that we will get a good deal – and now that good deal is clearer and closer than ever. Of course as a responsible Government we continue to plan for all scenarios, but with increased confidence that we will leave with a deal and that a ‘no deal’ scenario in March 2019 is significantly less likely. The Government

recognises that in the unlikely scenario of no deal between the UK and the EU, it would be important to reach a suitable resolution to the supply chain questions that would arise, particularly regarding Investigational Medicinal Products.

The Government has been consistent in saying that a key priority through the negotiations is to ensure that the UK remains one of the best places in the world for science and innovation. The Life Science Industrial Strategy set out a clear ambition to remain at the forefront of innovation, which includes a commitment to increase the number of clinical trials and to ensure the UK remains an attractive location for trials to take place, with a view to getting medicinal products licensed in the UK and elsewhere.

In February, Dr Ian Hudson CEO at the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency wrote to Dr Wollaston, chair of the Health and Social Care Select Committee about clinical trials.

We are fully committed to continuing a close working relationship with the EU, in the interests of public health and safety.

News story: Issues with our online services

Updated: Issues with WebFiling, CHD and WebCHeck

Were having issues that are affecting WebFiling, CHD and WebCHeck.

We are working hard to fix the issues and apologise for any inconvenience caused.