D/PQN/19-21/2020/04998/is 20 May 2020

Dear Jamie,

I undertook to write to you in answer to your Parliamentary Question 40728 dated 29th April 2020 in response to your questions on whether Defence would place a copy of any advice (a) undertaken and (b) commissioned on the use of Citriodiol as a treatment for COVID-19.

The well-being of our Armed Forces and ensuring they and their families continue to remain healthy is of upmost importance to me personally and the Ministry of Defence as a whole. On this basis, the Surgeon General recommended several measures that may offer some additional protection to our personnel when potentially exposed to COVID-19.  We introduced enhanced Force Health Protection Measures for operating in higher risk settings.  Many of these measures, including the use of Citriodiol, have been employed by both the emergency services and NHS Trusts.

Citriodiol is a natural and safe product, often found in commercially available insect repellents.  Weaker Citriodiol spray solutions form a barrier on the skin and have been found to provide a barrier against variants of the SARS virus similar to that causing the current pandemic. It has been used on an exploratory basis and for a small number of personnel.

Following consultation with subject matter experts – including infectious disease consultants, pathology advisors and public health experts – the Surgeon General's Research and Clinical Innovation team advised, albeit in lieu of conclusive research, that Citriodiol would do no harm and should be used on a precautionary basis, as an additional layer of protection against exposure to COVID-19.  Importantly, the use of Citriodiol and other enhanced measures does not replace the Government's direction on social distancing, hand-hygiene and the wearing of Personal Protective Equipment.

You will be aware the Secretary of State of Defence has written separately to The Rt Hon Tobias Ellwood, MP, Chair of the House of Commons' Defence Committee, who also wrote on this subject, in late April 2020.  He offered to provide an update on the findings of the further study that the Surgeon General tasked the Defence Science and Technology Laboratories to undertake on the specific use of Citriodiol against COVID-19. I extend the same offer to yourself as well as to John Healey MP who has also shown interest in this matter.

I hope this response has been helpful.

I am placing a copy of this letter, in the Library of the House as well as sending a version to John Healey MP.

Yours sincerely,



**JAMES HEAPPEY MP**