Department of Health & Social Care

*From the office of Lord Bethell*
*Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Innovation (Lords)*
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By email to: Lord Harries of Pentregarth

12 June 2020

Dear Lord Harries,

I have identified an error in my response to you during the oral question on Exercise Cygnus on 9th June.

In response to your query on Exercise Cygnus recommendations, I said: “I assure the noble and right reverend Lord that operation Cygnus happened in 2016 and the recommendations were completed by spring 2018. However, it is possible that nothing could have prepared us for the ferocity of Covid. Operation Cygnus prepared us for a flu pandemic and not for something with the savagery of Covid-19”.

The correct response should have been: I assure the noble and right reverend Lord that operation Cygnus happened in 2016 and all the recommendations were accepted. However, it is possible that nothing could have prepared us for the ferocity of Covid. Operation Cygnus prepared us for a flu pandemic and not for something with the savagery of Covid-19.

I want to make clear that all the recommendations from Exercise Cygnus have been incorporated into an on-going programme of work to review pandemic flu response plans.

Please accept my apologies for the error. I will deposit a copy of this letter in the Library.

Yours,

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**LORD BETHELL**