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Foresight Consortium

02 December 2019

I would like to thank you all for taking the time to meet on Tuesday 26 November to discuss the clinical and economic benefits and opportunities for Scotland from using digitally held patient data from NHS funded eye examinations to deliver transformative improvements in diagnostic, referral and treatment pathways.

As I mentioned we are keen to grow the life science business base in Scotland, particularly in SMEs. One area I hear repeatedly, including at the Life Sciences conference held on the day I met you, was how the data held within the NHS can support economic growth. As we discussed, there are already pockets of work being undertaken in areas such as data ownership and ethics and also the development of new diagnostic algorithms to speed up access to treatment.

I was interested in your model of self-sufficiency and the possible financial return to the NHS for re-investment into services. I am also interested in how this could support the Scottish Government's Development Programme for our partnerships in Africa where we are committed to support health facilities.

I understand you are concerned about the impact on this initiative from community optometrists disposing of historical patient data once they are no longer required to keep it, and that my officials have agreed to look into what support the Scottish Government can provide in this regard.

I also understand my officials have connected you to those working on the iCAIRD project who have been working to ensure safe and secure data access, and will also share information with you for an event in the new year which should be useful in developing the initial User Case. Should you also require industrial partners, colleagues in Scottish Enterprise or through the trade bodies in Scotland will also be able to help identify relevant companies.

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I am copying this email to Jeane Freeman, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport and Joe FitzPatrick, Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing, for their interests.

I wish you well on your endeavours and look forward to being kept abreast of developments at key stages of this proposal.



IVAN MCKEE

CC
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport
Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing

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