



UK “Outlier” in Not Protecting 500,000+ Vulnerable Patients with New Lifesaving Drug. AstraZeneca Denies Government Claims of Further Testing.

The UK government is alone in 30 countries in not purchasing the preventative drug “Evusheld” to protect its vulnerable citizens who cannot respond to Covid vaccines. Ministers and MPs have claimed that further efficacy trials are underway and that negotiations are commercially sensitive, but AstraZeneca explicitly denies this.

An AstraZeneca spokesperson said: “We are pleased to receive positive results from UKHSA following its completion of testing of Evusheld against BA.2. UKHSA is not currently performing any further testing.”

Evusheld is a combination of two long-acting antibodies (tixagevimab and cilgavimab). It is designed to protect clinically vulnerable people against Covid in cases where vaccines don’t work. The drug costs approximately £800 per dose and yields at least six months of strong protection.¹

The campaigning group Evusheld for the UK is working to ensure the availability of this drug. Evusheld would be lifesaving for the cancer patients, transplant recipients, and immunocompromised members of society who are still shielding.

Government ministers and officials have been meeting with AstraZeneca since 2021 but inexplicably have not decided to purchase the drug.

AstraZeneca’s spokesperson continued: “We have met regularly with Government on this matter since August of last year when the positive PROVENT trials results were communicated. To-date we have not been asked to supply the UK with Evusheld. There are approximately 30 countries developing or already have immunisation programmes and doses released across Europe, America, Asia and Africa.”

Professor Martin Paul Eve, one of the leaders of the Evusheld for the UK campaign, said: “The government has claimed that protecting its most vulnerable citizens is a priority. But we are not seeing the action that matches that rhetoric, though. Finally, the lifeline that cancer patients and organ transplant recipients, among others, need is here. Still, the UK is the only country not to provide access. The drug is not even available privately in the UK. We urgently call on MPs and Ministers to make this drug available to those identified as vulnerable by the NHS England RAPID-C19 task force.”

¹ Costs are subject to negotiation. Figures cited are those used in previous media articles and broadly in line with international comparisons.

For questions, quotations, or comments, please contact Professor Martin Paul Eve (martin@eve.gd).

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