

# Open Letter to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on National Leadership for Cell and Gene Therapies

The Rt Hon Wes Streeting MP  
Department of Health and Social Care  
By email: [dhsc.sofs@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:dhsc.sofs@dhsc.gov.uk)

Dear Secretary of State,

We, representatives from across the UK cell and gene therapy (CGT) ecosystem, are writing to ask the Government to provide clear national leadership on CGTs. The UK has been a leader in CGT development, and recent government commitments to doubling GDP investment into new medicines and increasing the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) cost effectiveness thresholds signal important progress. CGTs are already used for some blood disorders, blood cancers and rare genetic conditions, all with very small to small eligible patient populations.<sup>i</sup> Expanding access across just four indications could deliver over £20 billion in health benefits within a decade, driving UK leadership in this new era of medicine.<sup>ii</sup> These gains stem from higher productivity, fewer sick days, and improved quality of life for patients and caregivers.<sup>ii</sup> Without decisive action to tackle the unique challenges of CGTs, the UK risks losing its competitive edge, undermining their potential to drive progress toward the Life Sciences Sector Plan's ambition of ranking among Europe's top three nations for patient access to medicines.<sup>iii</sup>

The Cell and Gene Collective's *Tomorrow's Science, Today's NHS* Commission was the first cross-sector policy commission dedicated to understanding what is required for the UK to prepare for the next generation of CGTs. It drew on evidence from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), the National Health Service (NHS), NICE, clinicians, academics and patient groups and set out 25 practical recommendations to ensure the UK can safely, effectively and equitably deliver CGTs. A summary of the Commission's recommendations, evidence base and full list of expert witnesses can be found [here](#).

A central recommendation of the report is the need for **stronger national leadership**, including a dedicated Ministerial portfolio for CGTs to drive coordination across government and the NHS, and to chair the DHSC ATMP Coordination Group. We therefore ask that you:

- Appoint a dedicated Ministerial lead for Cell and Gene Therapies to provide clear national ownership and coordination; and

- Meet with the Collective to discuss the findings of the *Tomorrow's Science, Today's NHS* report and how the Government can support timely, safe and equitable access to these therapies.

While recent government commitments represent important first steps to improve the access pathway, there is an urgent need for further action on regulatory systems, access and reimbursement, and uptake and adoption. This would enable patients, the wider economy and the NHS to benefit from the long-term economic and social value of innovations like CGTs.

A system that fails to do so risks UK patients being left behind, missing out on treatments that are becoming available in neighbouring countries, while investment in pioneering medical breakthroughs shifts elsewhere.

Yours sincerely,

The Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick, The Rt Hon Sir Julian Lewis MP, The Cell and Gene Collective (Bayer, Johnson & Johnson, Gilead Sciences Ltd, Orchard Therapeutics and Vertex Pharmaceuticals), Gene People, Macular Society, Myotubular Trust, Retina UK and The Haemophilia Society



## About the Cell and Gene Collective

The Cell & Gene Collective is an alliance of biopharmaceutical companies with an interest in cell and gene therapies. Member companies are: Bayer, Johnson & Johnson, Gilead Sciences Ltd, Orchard Therapeutics and Vertex Pharmaceuticals. These companies have provided funding and input to OVID Health to act as secretariat for the Collective.

## References

<sup>i</sup> BIA (UK BioIndustry Association). UK cell and gene therapy: Leading the path to transformative medicine, 2023. Available online: <https://www.bioindustry.org/static/af2ee876-3d56-487f-84577fac4e022bb2/BIA-Cell-and-gene-therapy-report-2024.pdf>. Accessed November 2025.

<sup>ii</sup> Office for Health Economics. The value of cell and gene therapies to the UK economy. 2025. Available online: <https://www.ohe.org/publications/value-of-cell-and-gene-therapies-to-the-uk-economy/>. Accessed November 2025.

<sup>iii</sup> DHSC, DBT and OLS. Life Sciences Sector Plan, 2025. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/life-sciences-sector-plan/life-sciences-sector-plan>. Accessed November 2025.