

## Annex 3: Our Future Health

Our Future Health Ltd remains a company owned by a Charity.

The UK has a non-commercial [Biobank whose governance failed under scrutiny](#), whereas OFH exists to help “kick start” the life sciences industry with a company selling access to data and a charity doing marketing and publicity for the company. Their letters are optimised to be confusing to those who receive them.

We previously said “It does not seem unfair to describe Our Future Health as two steps away from offering a chocolate bar in return for DNA and lifetime data access”, and since then OFH has begun asking people to give up their DNA, their full medical history, and over time all other data held by Government, in return for a one-off £10 gift voucher. (Sometimes they don’t even offer that.)

There is a historical analogy. In the 1990s, there were two competing “genome projects”: the Human Genome Project was supported by the public purse and committed to public knowledge; a private competitor – the ‘Venterpillar’ – tried to privatise the lot, and went bust. Sir John Bell helped the Human Genome Project succeed, but switched sides to capitalise on the “[life sciences strategy](#)” he wrote.

Professor Sir John Bell CH subsequently learnt the [fickleness](#) of [billionaire sponsors](#). Sir John Bell, founder and prime mover behind Our Future Health, got his [CH](#) recently. What questions would the Palace ask before William/George would sign up to OFH? What are the answers? And why isn’t that information available to everyone?

When the CEO of OFH said the following on the “[NHS Confed podcast](#)”, how many of these things have they actually done over 2 years later? (And how many did they start and then withdraw quietly due to failure?)

“We’re not just giving people information that cannot be acted upon, as that’s not good for them, neither physical nor mental health. Initially, we’ll feed back information on disease where there are existing programmes for them to be dealt with, so for example, diabetes, ischaemic heart disease, heart disease, we have the existing NHS health check programme for people aged 40-74. What the additional information will gather through OFH is people will have more accurate information about their disease which can be dealt with when they go for their health check. Additionally, diseases like breast cancer, where we have a screening programme, being able to identify women who are at higher risk of breast cancer based on their genetic risk who are not identified, so who are not part of the screening programme, that will have to be done in close coordination with the NHS screening programmes as well. The whole programme is being done in partnership with the NHS, but its implementation, once the research phase is over, the implementation phase is a key challenge which we are aware of.”

[Since our 2023 questions](#), some things have moved on – Our Future Health has unlocked millions of pounds of public funds by sending ever more junk mail with an NHS logo on the envelope. (The NHS-related letters were sent when working with the NHS; OFH is now sending different “dear household” letters to addresses it is buying from junk mailshot companies.) Some of the technology and policy questions for OFH overlap with those to UK Biobank given the competition and overlap between the two entities.

In the world of Wes Streeting’s Single Patient Record, data available from the NHS will beat OFH on every metric other than blatant commercialism.

Prof Sir John Bell’s Our Future Health may fail in its quest to sell 5 million people’s data, but in doing so he may have encouraged the Blair Government in-exile to cause the same to happen to the data of everyone in England. He’d probably take that tradeoff.