



Marie Rimmer CBE, MP
Member of Parliament for St. Helens
South & Whiston
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
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Dear Constituent,

I firmly believe that vaccines are the most effective public health intervention against COVID-19. I am supporting efforts to ensure this lockdown is used to establish an immediate and effective programme to vaccinate Britain, to protect people against the virus and to enable restrictions to be lifted.

Nevertheless, I know that there are people in our constituency and across the country who are, entirely reasonably, vaccine-hesitant. Some might simply not want to have it and others may have concerns about safety.

Vaccines teach the body's immune system to recognise and fight the infection they have been designed to protect against. While some people suffer mild symptoms following vaccination, such as muscle aches or a raised temperature, it is important to know that this is not the disease itself but is instead the body's response to the vaccine.

Approval of vaccines is only given if the UK regulator – the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) – is satisfied that the vaccine is both safe and effective.

Vaccines are not currently mandatory during a pandemic. The Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984, which applies to England and Wales, is clear that any health protection regulations “may not include provision requiring a person to undergo medical treatment”. This includes vaccinations. Similar legislation is in place in Scotland.

As you may know, the UK, Scottish and Welsh governments have no plans to make any COVID-19 vaccine mandatory or to introduce so-called vaccine/immunity passports.

I am aware of ePetition 323442, MPs debated this petition on 14 December 2020. Responding in the debate, the Vaccines Minister confirmed that there are no plans to introduce restrictions on people who refuse a vaccination. He said that cards issued to people who receive a first vaccination contain information such as the date of their second vaccination but that they do not constitute so-called vaccine passports, nor can they be used as a form of identification.

As your elected representative in the UK Parliament, I welcome your views on this important issue. I will continue to bear in mind the points you have raised.

Thank you once again for contacting me.

Yours sincerely,

Marie Rimmer CBE, MP
Member of Parliament for St Helens South and Whiston

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