

MARY GLINDON MP

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR NORTH TYNESIDE

"I'm so proud to represent the amazing people of North Tyneside".



Dear constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about COVID-19 vaccines and the related campaign by Save Our Rights UK.

While I firmly believe that vaccines are the most effective public health intervention against COVID-19 - both to protect people against the virus and to enable restrictions to be lifted - I recognise that some people are vaccine-hesitant. Some people might simply not want to have it and others have 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. Approval 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 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.

I appreciate concerns, however, that there have been confused statements about plans for domestic immunity passports. As recently as 15 February, the Health Secretary said the use of a vaccine passport at a domestic or local level "is not anything we are planning to introduce". However, a week later the Prime Minister confirmed that the UK Government will review the use of "COVID status certification" to assess whether these could allow restrictions to be lifted more safely. The review is expected to report before 21 June 2021.

The introduction of vaccine passports for international travel must be carefully considered and led by the science, to enable people to travel safely. However, I recognise wider concerns about their use domestically. The Royal Society has warned that some groups may be unfairly discriminated against, including young people, pregnant women, and others who cannot have the vaccine for medical reasons. I believe we need urgent clarity from the UK Government on this important issue.

As your elected representative in the UK Parliament, I will follow developments in this area closely and bear in mind the points you have raised.

Thank you once again for contacting me.

Yours sincerely,

Mary