

E-Petition 323442

Prevent any restrictions on those who refuse a Covid-19 vaccination

I want the Government to prevent any restrictions being placed on those who refuse to have any potential Covid-19 vaccine. This includes restrictions on travel, social events, such as concerts or sports. No restrictions whatsoever.

You cannot force someone to have a vaccination, and should not be able to coerce them into it by way of restrictions. We have to the right to assess the risk ourselves as we have done in the past.

316,017 signatures

Government responded

This response was given on 11 September 2020

Parliament will debate this petition on 14 December 2020.

After clean water, vaccination is the most effective and crucial public health intervention, and a cornerstone of public health that we must not take for granted. It is vital that a significant proportion of people who are offered take up a Covid-19 vaccine in order to protect themselves as well as other vulnerable individuals. Averting a second wave is a key priority for the government and high take up of a vaccine when available will greatly contribute to that.

Immunisations save thousands of lives every year by preventing outbreaks of serious infectious diseases and, in cases such as smallpox and polio, eliminating diseases in the UK altogether. Since the introduction of the measles vaccine in 1968, it is estimated that 20 million cases and 4,500 deaths have been averted in the UK. From 1970 to 2017, it is estimated that rubella vaccination has averted 1,300 babies being born with congenital rubella syndrome and 25,000 terminations. With further innovation and the development of new vaccines, even more lives could be saved.

We believe it is everyone's responsibility to do the right thing for their own health, and for the benefit of the wider community. There are currently no plans to introduce a Covid-19 vaccine in a way that penalises those who do not take up the vaccine. However, the Government will carefully consider all options to improve vaccination rates, should that be necessary.

The UK has a world class national immunisation programme which is constantly reviewed and updated to reflect the changing nature of infectious diseases and provide the best protection for the public. All vaccines used in the UK are thoroughly tested, meet strict safety criteria and are carefully monitored after they are introduced into the national programme. Our evidence-based immunisation programmes are informed by the advice of our work leading expert committee – the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), which reviews a wide range of scientific and other evidence, keeping the vaccine schedule safe and relevant.

Immunisation offers everyone a chance at a healthy life from the earliest beginnings and into old age. It saves millions of lives every year and is widely recognised as one of the world's most successful and cost-effective health interventions. High uptake of a Covid-19 vaccine is the best way we have, to protect our health, our jobs, and our economy at large.

Department of Health and Social Care