

Chief Minister



19-21 Broad Street | St Helier
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Advocate P Sinel
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Charles House
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St Helier, JE4 9XE

18 August 2023

Dear Advocate Sinel,

Thank you for your letter of 26 July 2023 regarding COVID-19 vaccines and the measures that the Government is putting in place for those who believe they may have suffered harm caused by a vaccine against COVID-19.

Firstly, your comments about consent not being provided by those who received vaccinations against COVID-19 as part of the Government's Vaccination Programme are incorrect. All those who receive a vaccine are required to provide informed consent before a vaccine is administered to them.

COVID-19 vaccinations are not and have never been compulsory in Jersey. This contrasts with some other jurisdictions where, for example, certain workers have been required to have a COVID-19 vaccine to continue to work in health and social care settings. Jersey follows the recommendations of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). All COVID-19 vaccines used as part of the UK and Jersey vaccination programmes are approved vaccines used in accordance with guidance issued by the JCVI and are approved by the UK medicines regulator, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). The Government has recommended and encouraged Islanders to be vaccinated against COVID-19 and will continue to offer booster programmes in line with the JCVI's advice.

Booking a vaccination appointment via the online booking portal requires that consent is provided at this stage. Upon arrival at the check-in area at the vaccination centre (which also demonstrates consent), every individual is required to provide consent by presenting ID, confirming who they are, why they are attending the centre and by giving information about any previous COVID-19 vaccinations.

Check-in staff at the vaccination centre provide each individual with the manufacturer's vaccine information leaflets before they move to the next stage. The vaccinator will then engage in a discussion about the risks and benefits of vaccination. Individuals can change their mind or withdraw consent at any point before the vaccine is administered.

In addition, extensive evidence-based information has been published to ensure that this consent can be well informed. This information is readily available and accessible in multiple formats and media. This includes information on the benefits and possible side-effects of COVID-19 vaccines, all of which has been provided on a single page of the Government's website (accessible at <https://www.gov.je/Health/Coronavirus/Vaccine/pages/covid19vaccineinformation.aspx>).

Regarding the support being provided to those who believe they may have suffered harm caused by a vaccination against COVID-19, the Government has responded to all those who have contacted us directly with any such concerns. Such matters are treated with the utmost importance, and we have been engaging with complainants to keep them informed of the support we are working to provide.

The Government is continuing to hold positive discussions with UK counterparts to enable Jersey residents to access the national Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme (VDPS). At present, it appears that a route to enable Jersey residents to access the VDPS may be established before the end of this year. This would allow those who received an MHRA approved vaccination against COVID-19 which was administered in Jersey as part of the Government's Vaccination Programme, which they believe may have caused them illness or injury, to have such damages assessed under the VDPS.

This support would be in addition to financial assistance which is already available to Jersey residents under the social security system. I would like to add that the Government of Jersey takes its duty to provide support seriously, and last year, as a related example, helped to establish a new clinic to support Islanders living with Long COVID. As such, it is understood that this can be considered an ever-evolving environment, and one in which future developments will be acted upon as they arise, especially the VDPS.

I understand that it may be frustrating that the Minister for Health and Social Services and I am unable to provide you with more details on access to the Scheme at this stage. However, I can assure you, and all Islanders, that this work is of high priority and that further details will be released as soon as they are available.

I have copied this letter to all States Members for their information.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kristina Moore'.

Deputy Kristina Moore
Chief Minister

Cc. States Members