



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

28<sup>th</sup> September 2021

*Jean Contreant*

**RE: BOOSTER COVID-19 VACCINE FOR ASTHMA PATIENTS**

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of your concerns regarding offering a COVID-19 booster vaccine for asthma patients. I have read your concerns with great consideration and interest.

The Joint Committee on Vaccination & Immunisation (JCVI) concluded that only those with more severe forms of asthma are at clinically high risk from COVID-19. This group are defined as adults with asthma who require continuous or repeated use of systemic steroids, or with previous exacerbations requiring hospital admission and will have been eligible for vaccination as part of 'priority group six'. An individual with a more severe case of asthma may have been included in the 'clinically extremely vulnerable group', in which case they will have been eligible as part of 'priority group four'.

To assist GPs in identifying patients eligible for a vaccine in each priority cohort, I understand that NHS Digital aligned specifications for the identification of patients via their medical records with GP system suppliers. Asthma sufferers were identified through this system and were invited to make an appointment when the vaccination programme reached their priority cohort. I urge anyone who thinks they should be in these categories to get in touch with their GP to discuss their care.

I appreciate that as we approach winter, many people may be worried about the impact this could have on the COVID-19 outbreak. With increasing levels of social mixing and close social contact, it is expected that during the winter, COVID-19 will circulate alongside other respiratory viruses, including seasonal flu. These viruses have the potential to add substantially to the winter pressures usually faced by the NHS. I know that a number of my constituents are also concerned by recent data suggesting that vaccine protection begins to wane after six months

It is welcome, therefore, that booster doses of the COVID-19 vaccine are being given to those who were vaccinated in the first phase of the rollout earlier this year. This will be no earlier than six months after an individual's second dose and I am told that these booster vaccines will be deployed in the same order as the initial rollout. People are being offered either a full dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, or a half dose of the Moderna vaccine, following scientific evidence showing that both provide a strong booster response. This will be regardless of which vaccine the individual previously had.





Our vaccine rollout has been phenomenal and, like the Government, I believe it is vital that we do everything possible to prolong the protection vaccines offer. The NHS are contacting people directly to arrange a booster and I urge all those eligible to get their vaccine as soon as they can, so they have the strongest possible protection over the winter months.

The booster programme includes all those aged 16 to 49 years of age with underlying health conditions that put them at higher risk of severe COVID-19. This includes adults with poorly controlled asthma, as defined in the 'Green Book', which sets out the latest information on vaccines and vaccine procedures. It is welcome that 'poorly controlled asthma' has been explicitly defined in the Green Book and I hope this will avoid any future confusion.

As you mention, the interim JCVI advice included offering boosters to those in an influenza risk group; however, the final advice only included those in a COVID-19 at-risk group. While I can assure you that the final advice covers all those with poorly controlled asthma, I know this change is a concern to many of my constituents and so I will seek clarification on the situation and the reasons for the change.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

*With best wishes,*

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP  
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT  
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**