



Department
of Health &
Social Care

*From the Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care*

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Tom Pursglove MP
House of Commons
Westminster
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16 September 2021

Dear Tom,

Thank you very much for your letter dated 22nd August 2021.

I would first like to sincerely apologise to your constituents for the issues they have been experiencing following their participation in the Novavax trial. I and my Chief Medical Officers share their frustration.

Clinical trials of COVID-19 vaccinations have played a critical role in getting us to the point where we have safe, approved vaccines. Without your constituents' participation in trials such as these we would not have been able to deliver a vaccination programme which has saved more than 60,000 lives and prevented 22 million infections in England alone.

Being in a COVID-19 vaccine trial should not disadvantage anyone. This applies to all trial volunteers irrespective of whether they have had a vaccine that is licenced or unlicensed, such as Novavax. It is down to the manufacturer of Novavax to file to the MHRA for authorisation in the UK and to date they have not done so. The safety of the public will always come first. A COVID-19 vaccine will only be authorised once it has met robust standards on safety, effectiveness and quality through clinical trials and authorised for use by the MHRA. The MHRA rigorously assesses the data in the shortest time possible, without compromising the thoroughness of the review. Once they have thoroughly reviewed the data, the MHRA seeks advice from the Government's independent advisory body, the Commission on Human Medicines. They critically assess the data before advising on the safety, quality and effectiveness of any potential vaccine.

This government's policy is that UK clinical trial participants should be treated as equivalent to individuals fully vaccinated with a deployed vaccine. I am pleased to say that over 99% of vaccine clinical trial participants in England can now surface their vaccination information through the NHS COVID Pass, for domestic certification purposes. We continue to work to resolve this for everyone. Clinical trial participants can also use their Pass to benefit from relaxed UK border measures upon arrival from an amber-list country.

There is currently no internationally agreed policy on clinical exemptions for proving COVID-status. It is the decision of the government of the country the person is travelling into to set their inbound travel policy. You are right to highlight that the current situation is impacting on trial participants' ability to travel. We continue to work hard to influence other countries to recognise clinical trial participants as fully vaccinated and I am personally committed to taking all necessary steps to resolve this issue.

We are working hard to influence this approach internationally. Discussions are ongoing with other countries, including through groups such as the G7, the EU Commission and the WHO to shape the approach taken around the world to sharing health status for travel, including vaccination status. The WHO supports an Emergency Committee decision that clinical trial volunteers should not be disadvantaged in travel arrangements, recognising the critical importance of increasing global understanding of COVID-19 vaccines.

I would like to note, separately, that people vaccinated with Novavax can travel to Greece, since Novavax is a deployed vaccine within that jurisdiction. We are therefore urgently seeking advice from our embassy in Athens to confirm whether the Greek authorities will accept the NHS travel Pass as proof of fully vaccinated status for all UK Novavax trial participants.

Thank you once more for relaying the concerns of your constituents. We hope this letter provides you with some reassurance and my team will continue to keep you updated as this work progresses.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S. Javid.', is centered on the page.

RT HON SAJID JAVID MP