



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

22nd January 2024

Dear Constance,

RE: PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE INTERNATIONAL HEALTH REGULATIONS

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of your concerns about the proposed changes to the *International Health Regulations*; I have read your comments with interest.

The *International Health Regulations (2005)* (IHR) are a key part of the global health security system to prevent, protect against, control, and provide a public health response to, the international spread of disease.

I appreciated your concern over the recent amendments. However, the UK Government is eager to ensure that countries' obligations under the IHR remain fit for purpose and reflect the lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic. Measures that the Government wish to see include a stronger global commitment to effective disease surveillance, early reporting of potential health threats, and transparency in sharing information. I understand that the UK continues to formulate positions during ongoing textual negotiations and has engaged other World Health Organisation member states on the matter, including through the Working Group on Amendments to the IHR (2005).

In regard to specific amendments, such as Article 59 and 16, I welcome that the Government supports targeted IHR amendments to ensure a suitable global framework to respond to the international spread of disease, whilst strengthening preparedness and compliance. Parliament may scrutinise legislation relating to amendments accepted by the UK.

Additionally, I can assure you that the speculation that somehow the WHO undermines UK sovereignty and gives the WHO powers over national public health measures is simply not the case. The UK remains in control of any future domestic decisions about public health matters - such as domestic vaccination - that might be needed in any future pandemic that we may have to manage. The Government continues to support the WHO as an institution, working with the WHO and other member states to deliver a WHO that is more efficient, accountable, effective and sustainably financed.

Once again, thank you for taking 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