

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA



Professor Chris Whitty
Chief Medical Officer
Department for Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

4th September 2021

Dear Professor Whitty,

Re: Childhood Vaccinations

The JCVI on Friday declined to recommend vaccinating healthy children in the 12 to 15 years age group on the basis that the potential health benefit to children is so marginal that there are insufficient grounds to offer mass vaccination for this age group.

We recognise that you have now been put in the unenviable position of being asked to revisit the decision of the country's leading independent vaccination experts, who have already said "that there is considerable uncertainty regarding the magnitude of the potential harms" in proceeding with mass vaccination of children.

Moreover, the JCVI in their most recent statement say the "margin of benefit based primarily on a health perspective is considered too small to support advice on a universal programme of vaccination of otherwise healthy 12- to 15-year-old children at this time".

We understand that your review will include an assessment of perceived broader benefits of vaccination, and in particular on whether vaccination would assist in avoiding disruption to education. It is clear, though, that disruption to education is not an inevitable consequence of rising COVID cases. Differential approaches to school closures internationally have demonstrated that school disruption is a policy choice not a public health consequence.

Despite the fact that the UK has comparable COVID mortality rates to our European neighbours, British children have missed significantly more schooling than children in almost any other European country. We therefore urge you to make your recommendation based on the potential harms and benefits to children of the vaccine itself, and not based on the harms they may suffer as a result of potential policy decisions - as in fact Sajid Javid said just one week ago when he wrote that "the main consideration for any decision on vaccinating our young people will always be the risks and benefits to children themselves".

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Our children have suffered immensely during the pandemic, and have sacrificed their education, freedom and in many cases well-being for the benefit of society. Any decision to vaccinate healthy children against COVID must be based on their welfare and their welfare alone.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Lewer MP

Sir Desmond Swayne MP

Sir Graham Brady MP, Chair of 1922
Committee

Chris Green MP

Lee Anderson MP

Greg Smith MP

Esther McVey MP

Philip Davies MP

Miriam Cates MP

Peter Bone MP

Jamie Wallis MP

Steve Brine MP

Simon Fell MP

Mark Jenkinson MP

Pauline Latham MP

cc.

Right Hon Boris Johnson MP

Right Hon Sajid Javid MP