



Committee of Public Accounts

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

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Sir Chris Wormald KCB
Permanent Secretary
Department of Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London
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12 February 2021

Dear Sir Chris,

RE: Vaccination against COVID-19 for outreach workers helping rough sleepers

The Public Accounts Committee held an evidence session on Monday 25 January on the National Audit Office's recent report *Investigation into the housing of rough sleepers during the COVID-19 pandemic* (HC 1075).

During the evidence session, we asked the witnesses from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government about vaccinating rough sleepers. We heard that rough sleepers will receive their vaccinations in line with their position in the priority groups as defined by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation. MHCLG also told us that it is providing support to enable rough sleepers to have access to vaccination at the relevant time; for example, asking councils and others to ensure that rough sleepers are registered with a GP, and that it is working closely with the Department for Health and Social Care and the NHS.

In her evidence, Baroness Casey raised concerns with us about the priority status of those working with rough sleepers and other vulnerable individuals, who are not currently seen as key workers for vaccination purposes. These people are undertaking challenging work in difficult circumstances with some of the most vulnerable in society with whom social distancing is often a real challenge.

The committee appreciates that the decisions over vaccine priorities are complex but it would be helpful if you could consider this evidence and keep the committee updated about any planned changes to vaccine priority.

Since the hearing there has been an announcement that undocumented asylum seekers will be able to access the vaccine and that no enforcement action will be taken against them. Can you clarify if these individuals will need to register with a GP to be able to access the vaccine; whether there are any plans to proactively reach these people and what plans are in place to ensure second vaccines are delivered.

I would very much welcome your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Meg Hillier". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

MEG HILLIER MP
CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS