

From the Permanent Secretary
and HSC Chief Executive



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Máinnistiríe O Poustle

www.health-ni.gov.uk

Jim Shannon MP

jim.shannon.mp@parliament.uk

Castle Buildings
Upper Newtownards Road
BELFAST, BT4 3SQ

Tel: 02890520559

Fax: 02890520573

Email: peter.may@health-ni.gov.uk

Your Ref:

Our ref: PM
SCORR-0117-2023

Date: 30 January 2023

Dear Jim

Thank you for your email of 25 January 2023 regarding correspondence from one of your constituents, Kathy Gray.

I can confirm that a reply was issued by email to Ms Gray from the Department of Health on December 2nd 2022, addressing the points Ms Gray raised in her correspondence of 7th November 2022 which related to a Freedom of Information response she had received from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

I note in Ms Gray's e-mail to you she states that "*To the information coming out of MHRA through FOI that 47 people have died from the vaccine and there have been nearly 5000 serious adverse effects according to the yellow card scheme*"

The MHRA continually monitor the safety of all medicines, including vaccines and actively encourage any member of the public or health professional to submit suspected side effects through the Yellow Card scheme. The Department have fact-checked the claim above with the MHRA and they have advised that reported reactions **have not been proven to be related to the vaccine and should not be interpreted as such**. It also states that many possible adverse events reported via its Yellow Card reporting system do not have any relation to the vaccine and it is often coincidental that symptoms occurred around the same time as vaccination.

* The MHRA explained, a high proportion of people vaccinated early in the vaccination campaign were very elderly, and/or had pre-existing medical conditions. Older age and chronic underlying illnesses make it more likely that coincidental adverse events will occur, especially given the millions of people vaccinated.

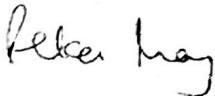


INTEGRITY

In relation to Ms Gray's further queries regarding the type of media and literature used to inform the public of adverse reactions from COVID-19 vaccines. I can advise that as part of the consent process, individuals who avail of the offer of a COVID-19 vaccination are made aware of potential side effects, as outlined in the relevant product's Summary of Product Characteristics and in line with MHRA advice.

COVID-19 vaccination has saved thousands of people's lives and protected many more from serious illness and hospitalisation. It has been central to society heading back to normality. The current booster campaign is playing a vital role in protecting those most vulnerable to the virus and going forward the Department will continue to be guided by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), an independent expert committee who advise all four UK Governments with respect of all vaccinations.

Yours sincerely



Peter May