

Open Letter and FOI Request from Dr Sarah Myhill, UKMFA Director, to GMC CEO Charlie Massey and Chair Prof Dame Carrie MacEwen

22 February 2026

Dear [Professor Dame Carrie MacEwen](#) and [Charlie Massey](#)

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST CONCERNING THE COVID VACCINATION ROLL OUT

I am writing to you to make a Freedom of Information Act Request for certain information regarding the Covid Vaccination roll out, Informed Consent, and the response of the GMC to these issues.

Before, I submit the detail of my request, I am laying out my logic and reasoning in making such a request. This preface is important because it gives the broader context in which this request is being made.

1. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HAVING GUIDANCE ON INFORMED CONSENT AND ENFORCING THAT GUIDANCE

Whilst the GMC has good guidance on Informed Consent, namely "Decision Making and Consent" https://www.gmc-uk.org/cdn/documents/gmc-guidance-for-doctors---decision-making-and-consent-english_pdf-84191055.pdf, the mere existence of such documentation does not ensure Informed Consent happens in practice.

Having laws written down does not prevent crimes being committed. One has to do more, one has to enforce those laws.

2. GMC DUTY TO ENABLE DOCTORS TO PROVIDE SAFE CARE

One of the four themes , or duties, of the GMC, is to 'enable health professionals to provide safe care' (<https://www.gmc-uk.org/about/how-we-work/corporate-strategy-and-plans/corporate-strategy>) and Informed Consent is part of that safe care.

So, the GMC, per its own goals, should have been enabling professionals (doctors) to provide Informed Consent to those being offered the Covid vaccinations. Using our analogy, the GMC should have been **enforcing** the need for Informed Consent for Covid vaccinations.

3. PRESSURES DURING THE COVID PANDEMIC PUSHING AGAINST INFORMED CONSENT

In addition, we know that there were significant external pressures pushing against doctors giving such Informed Consent. Examples of this include -

- The Covid vaccination roll out was done in haste. The development of COVID-19 vaccines was unprecedented in speed, with authorised vaccines produced in less than 12 months, compared to the typical 10 to 15 years. The CDC details the timeline for vaccine development on its webpage - <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/basics/how-developed-approved.html> and gives an average time of 10-15 years for vaccine development. The report "The race to a Covid-19 vaccination" , 'Drugs Context' 2021 Feb 16;10:2020-12-2, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7889064/> notes that Covid vaccines 'were developed in less than a year after identification of COVID-19' in The previous fastest vaccine development was for Mumps, taking roughly 4 years in the 1960s (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mumps_vaccine). The rapidity of this roll out meant,

notwithstanding safety issues with the vaccine itself, that there was pressure on doctors to comply with the roll out, not to 'slow things down', with discussion and to avoid implementation of full Informed Consent, and to circumvent such Informed Consent.

- There were significant media campaigns 'encouraging' people to have the Covid vaccination. The primary method of 'encouragement' was to shame those who might refuse to take the vaccinations, to imply that it was your civic duty to be vaccinated, to suggest that you might 'kill your granny' if you weren't vaccinated, and the use of celebrities to coerce people to get vaccinated. This all added to the political pressure for doctors to comply with the roll out, not to 'slow things down', with discussion and to avoid implementation of full Informed Consent, and to circumvent such Informed Consent. Examples of these campaigns include as below, and all these campaigns were targeted using both legacy and social media outlets -
 - **"Get Boosted Now" (2022):** Targeted younger audiences (18–34) using Snapchat filters, social media, and partnerships with high-profile figures. See 'Press Partnership Cover Wrap' - https://www.communications.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Press_partnership_coverwrap.pdf
 - **"I've Had My Vaccine" (2021):** A widespread social media campaign using profile frames and GIF stickers on Facebook and Instagram to foster a sense of community support. See the Gov.uk webpage detailing this campaign and resources available - <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-campaign-to-support-vaccine-roll-out-backed-by-social-media-companies-and-british-institutions>
 - **Influencer/Celebrity Engagement:** Campaigns featured high-profile figures (e.g., Sir Elton John, Sir Michael Caine) to build trust. Here is one YouTube from this campaign - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8kHYUq0_0YQ
 - **Shaming campaigns** became brutal and actually mocked the dead, and this issue became so prevalent that the University of Oxford Practical Ethics Department published an article "Shaming unvaccinated people has to stop. We've turned into an angry mob and it has to stop" [December 2021] (<https://blog.uehiro.ox.ac.uk/2021/12/shaming-unvaccinated-people-has-to-stop-weve-turned-into-an-angry-mob-and-its-getting-ugly>) This article details these shaming campaigns, and so I shall not repeat them here but for example it included....
 - **"Don't kill your granny"** slogan - this phrase was much used as a means to shame younger people to have the vaccination. It was repeated in the media (example - <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/07/preston-added-to-areas-with-bans-on-households-mixing-due-to-covid-19>) and the then Health Secretary, Matt Hancock, used the phrase himself (<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8705361/Coronavirus-NOT-control-Britain-Matt-Hancock-claims.html>)
 - **Other campaigns included**
 - In conjunction with the UK Govt, Facebook and Instagram introduced profile frames and GIFs (e.g., in partnership with the NHS, Premier League, and Beano) to allow users to show they had been vaccinated or to shame others into doing so.
 - The "Every vaccination gives us hope" campaign was launched to shame the under-50s to get their jab

- Companies like Uber, Bolt, and Deliveroo supported the initiative by providing incentives, such as ride discounts for visiting vaccine centers.
 - The campaign promoted "grab a jab" pop-up sites in convenient locations like supermarkets, football stadiums, and shopping centers.
 - All of this meant that everywhere anyone looked, all they saw, was one message - if you don't have the Covid vaccination, you are a bad person, and not doing your civic duty
- **Vaccination as a Condition of Deployment (VCOD) Regulations.** This was initially implemented for care home workers in November 2021 (<https://www.careprovideralliance.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/covid-vaccination-as-condition-of-deployment-cpa-qanda.pdf>). It was subsequently extended to cover all frontline health and social care workers—including doctors, nurses, and support staff with direct patient contact—with a deadline of April 1, 2022. After much pressure, the mandatory vaccination regulation was abandoned and revoked in March 2022 before it was fully implemented, but the message was clear enough - see point 6 below for the GMC response to this.
 - **Travel restrictions** - The use of passenger locator forms for those entering the UK, and the banning of unvaccinated UK residents from travelling to constantly changing groups of countries all added to the pressure to be vaccinated, as a means of just carrying on with normal life. With its relatively high proportion of foreign born registered doctors, the medical profession was harder hit than most by travel restrictions for the purposes of, for example, visiting family in home countries. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Travel_during_the_COVID-19_pandemic)
 - **Alternatives to Covid vaccination** - Doctors who suggested alternatives to Covid vaccination or spoke against the roll out were investigated and often censured by the GMC. I, myself, am still fighting such as case (<https://www.conservativewoman.co.uk/the-general-medical-council-is-advising-doctors-to-be-untruthful-and-dishonest/>) Other doctors so persecuted include Dr Jayne Donegan, Dr Samuel White, Dr Aseem Malhotra, Dr David Cartland, Dr Daniel Armstrong and Dr Anne McCloskey. I return to this point in my Freedom of Information Request below. Even when, for example, Sir David Michael Davis [KCB MP](#) forced a debate about the efficacy of Vitamin D in Covid-19 prevention and reduction in symptoms, and death rates in the House of Commons (<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-01-14/debates/32A497CB-0B5D-4C8B-9974-AB02678ADA3B/VitaminDCovid-19> and <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cdp-2021-0091/>) , he was ridiculed in the media, and the party line was to totally downplay these benefits, and to increase the pressure for a quicker and wider Covid vaccination roll out.

All of this meant that there was considerable political pressure on doctors to comply with the vaccination roll-out and ignore matters of Informed Consent. This pressure to comply went diametrically against the over-arching duty of doctors to provide that Informed Consent, to always act in the best interests of their patients, to first do no harm, and to adhere to the core principles of the Hippocratic Oath, as detailed in Good Medical Practice.

4. GMC'S ROLE TO ENSURE THAT THESE POLITICAL PRESSURES DID NOT OBVIATE INFORMED CONSENT AND PATIENT SAFETY

It was the GMC's duty in all this to support doctors in ensuring that these political pressures did not coerce doctors to put aside all those matters of Informed Consent, and indeed to put aside the best interests of their patients.

The GMC had this duty because,

- First, it has put a duty upon itself to 'enable health professionals to provide safe care' (as above) and this obviously, per GMC Guidance, includes Informed Consent
- Second, and as explained below, the GMC places a duty upon doctors to resist external pressures, political or whatever, and always put the interest of patients as their first concern

At the risk of repetition, the GMC does indeed place a duty on all doctors to resist external pressures, political, or whatever, and be resolute in doing their best for their patients. It is the GMC that places this duty on doctors when, in its Good Medical Practice (https://www.gmc-uk.org/cdn/documents/good-medical-practice-2024---english_pdf-102607294.pdf) it states that:

"you must make the care of patients your first concern"

There are two key phrases in this excerpt, which appears in the first paragraph of GMP under the heading "The duties of medical professionals registered with the GMC"

1. The phrase 'you must' means that this is a legal duty - in the Terminology section of "Decision Making and Consent" (https://www.gmc-uk.org/cdn/documents/gmc-guidance-for-doctors---decision-making-and-consent-english_pdf-84191055.pdf) the GMC is very clear - "'You must' is used for a legal or ethical duty you're expected to meet"
2. The phrase 'your first concern' means that the care of the patient is primary, and that all other considerations, political pressure, financial pressure, whatever, MUST be secondary.

So, we know that the GMC placed this LEGAL duty on doctors to make the care of their patients their first concern, and this, de facto, includes Informed Consent. We also know that the GMC placed a duty on itself to enable doctors to follow the duties it places on them (the 'enable health professionals to provide safe care' point above).

5. SUMMARY

In summary,

1. The GMC places a duty on itself to enable doctors to provide safe care, with safe care as defined in its own various Guidance documents. This is MUST do.
2. Informed Consent is within the GMC's definition of safe care and this MUST be its overarching duty that trumps political pressures.
3. The GMC places a duty on doctors to follow its various Guidance documents and doctors MUST comply
4. *ipso fatco*, the GMC should have been helping and enabling doctors (more MUSTINGS) to give Informed Consent regarding the Covid vaccination roll out

But, what did the GMC actually do to help, enable and support doctors in this LEGAL duty of doctors to give Informed Consent that the GMC itself imposed upon doctors?

6. EXAMPLE OF WHAT THE GMC DID ACTUALLY DO THAT GOES AGAINST ALL THIS GUIDANCE TO ENABLE DOCTORS TO MAKE PATIENTS THEIR FIRST CONCERN

As to what the GMC actually did to support doctors in giving Informed Consent regarding the Covid vaccination roll out, following the duty that it placed, quite rightly, on the very same doctors to do exactly that, this matter will be the subject of my Freedom of Information Act Request as below. I am making this request because it is very difficult to find any such supportive statements, or guidance, from the GMC, that deal explicitly with the matter of Informed Consent and the Covid vaccination roll out.

However, and by way of just one example, it is relatively easy to find examples of where GMC ADDED to the political and financial pressure on doctors to ignore Informed Consent guidance, or the best interests of their patients, concerning the Covid vaccination roll out. In its 'Joint statement from the GMC and Academy of Medical Royal Colleges on doctors' vaccination' (<https://www.gmc-uk.org/news/news-archive/joint-statement-from-the-gmc-and-academy-of-medical-royal-colleges-on-doctors-vaccination>), which followed a Government consultation on revoking a condition of deployment for health and social care workers in England to have had the Covid vaccination, it is clear that the GMC is coercing doctors themselves to continue to have the Covid vaccination. The implied threat in this sentence is very clear:

"While the GMC does not consider that solely turning down vaccination would in itself form the basis of a fitness to practise referral..."

By merely including the term 'fitness to practise referral', the threat is clear. Further excerpts from this statement make the GMC's views very clear:

"Being a good doctor means more than simply being a good clinician. Doctors can provide leadership to their colleagues and vision for the organisations in which they work and for the profession as a whole. "

"Over 95% of doctors have already received at least two vaccinations, with the majority of these having also been boosted. We strongly encourage those who haven't yet taken up the full course of vaccination to do so."

It is obvious to any observer that, with the GMC coercing doctors so strongly to take the Covid vaccinations THEMSELVES, there is a clear message to those same doctors to carry on vaccinating their patients in the same haste, without Informed Consent.

So, rather than supporting doctors in their duties regarding Informed Consent that it, itself, imposed on those doctors, the GMC actually applied more pressure for doctors to not do so. This is like the Police encouraging offenders to carry on offending.

7. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUEST

By the term 'Covid vaccination roll out', and for clarity, I am referring to the following:

Phase 1 Vaccine Priority Groups - from 8 December 2020

Order	Priority group	Number eligible (estimated) [95]
1	residents in a care home for older adults and their carers	0.8M
2	all those aged 80 years and over, and frontline health and social care workers	7.1M
3	all those aged 75 years and over	2.3M
4	all those aged 70 years and over, and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals	4.4M
5	all those aged 65 years and over	2.9M
6	all those aged 16 years to 64 years with underlying health conditions which put them at higher risk of serious disease and mortality	7.3M
7	all those aged 60 years and over	1.8M
8	all those aged 55 years and over	2.4M
9	all those aged 50 years and over	2.8M

Phase 2 from 13 April 2021

Order	Priority group	Number eligible (estimated)
10	all those aged 40 to 49 years	~21 million [102]
11	all those aged 30 to 39 years	
12	all those aged 18 to 29 years	

Juvenile roll out from 19 July 2021

Healthy individuals under the age of 18, and all under 16s, were not part of the initial vaccine rollout, on the grounds of their relatively low risk from the virus and the then limited availability of evidence relating to COVID-19 vaccines' effects on young people. On 19 July 2021, the vaccine rollout was expanded to vulnerable adolescents from the age of 12 and young people in the three months prior to their 18th birthday. They were joined by all 16- and 17-year-olds on 4 August

Booster phases from September 2021

Various groups were given booster doses during September 2021, November 2021, February 2022, and onward from Autumn 2022

Now here is my detailed FOIA request - please can you provide me details of the following.

Please provide all documentation concerning these requests for the period covering both the Covid vaccination roll out and also for the period before the Covid vaccination roll out commencing 1st January 2019, and also for the period since the Covid vaccination roll out, as defined above, has ceased.

- All internal discussions, committee meeting minutes, communications made with doctors, either on an individual basis, or to the wider, perhaps entire, pool of GMC registered doctors, and any other relevant documentation, concerning the matter of ensuring Informed Consent of any person receiving a Covid Vaccination in the UK.
- *All internal discussions, committee meeting minutes, communications made with doctors, either on an individual basis, or to the wider, perhaps entire, pool of GMC registered doctors, and any other relevant documentation concerned with supporting and enabling doctors registered with the GMC in the UK to resist the political pressures to circumvent Informed Consent for Covid vaccinations, these pressures to include those as listed above, and any other pressures identified by the GMC.
- *All internal discussions, committee meeting minutes, communications made with doctors, either on an individual basis, or to the wider, perhaps entire, pool of GMC registered doctors, and any other relevant documentation concerning the support that the GMC gave to **individual** GMC registered doctors, who were punished by their employers for resisting such political pressures, as described above, and also for **individual** GMC registered doctors who lost their jobs, or otherwise suffered financially, or career-wise, as a result of resisting such political pressures, as described above. I appreciate that you may not be able to name such GMC registered doctors and so therefore I am making clear that, should it be deemed necessary, redacted version of such documentation is acceptable to me.
- *Full details of internal discussions, committee meeting minutes, communications with any UK Government department, or Uk Government representative, concerning the matter of the Covid vaccination roll out.
- *Details of all publicly available, by which I mean, published on the MPTS website, details of all GMC registered doctors who were reprimanded in any way for the stance that they took on Informed Consent vis the Covid vaccination roll out.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Myhill