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# Thousands sign petition against vaccine passports

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Coronavirus pandemic



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**A petition urging the government not to introduce vaccine passports could be debated by MPs after it gained close to 200,000 signatures.**

The online petition says the passports could be "used to restrict the rights of people who have refused a Covid-19 vaccine".

On Tuesday, Boris Johnson announced a review of vaccine certificates or passports.

Proof of vaccination could allow people to travel or attend large events.

Vaccination is not mandatory, and the petition says passports "would be unacceptable".

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The prime minister has appointed Cabinet Office Minister Michael Gove to look at the issues involved in any scheme, which could see the existing NHS app updated to include proof of vaccination.

Mr Johnson said on Tuesday there are "deep and complex issues" with using vaccine passports or certificates to prove someone's Covid-19 "status".

He said using certificates to allow visits to venues such as pubs and theatres was a "novelty for our country".

Previously, the government had said it would not introduce such a scheme for domestic use.

The petition posted on the Parliament website says: " We want the government to commit to not rolling out any e-vaccination status/ immunity passport to the British public."

"The government must be completely clear to the public about the use of vaccine passports and their intentions, which will undoubtedly affect societal cohesion."

## 'Exclusion and division'

The human rights pressure group Liberty, has also expressed concern about the idea.

Its head of policy and campaigns, Sam Grant, said vaccine passports could "create a two tier society where some people can access support and freedoms, while others are shut out - with the most marginalised among us hardest hit. The road out of lockdown can't ride roughshod over our rights.

"That's why we need the Coronavirus Act to be repealed, and replaced with strategies that provide support to help people to follow health guidance. That means rejecting proposals like immunity passports which are based on exclusion and division. Instead, we must work to bridge divides with strategies

exclusion and division. Instead, we must work to bridge divides with strategies that protect everyone."

Any parliamentary petition signed by over 100,000 people must be considered for a debate in Westminster Hall, the Commons' second chamber.

Westminster Hall debates had been suspended due to restrictions on Parliament's capacity to adhere to social distancing rules, but on Thursday MPs voted to restart them.

Chair of the Petitions Committee, Catherine McKinnell said 41 petitions currently waiting for debates had been started since the suspension.

She added: "I welcome the House's agreement to resume Westminster Hall debates, and for them to be hybrid, helping to keep Parliament Covid-secure and ensure that as many Members as possible can take part in our debates."

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