

RE: Councillor Proof of Vaccination Policy

Dec 23, 2001

Dear Chair and members of the CSC,

There are many strong opinions about how governments should deal with a novel respiratory virus. Substantial evidence for significant reductions in transmission must be the case before one group of people is treated differently than another. As a council that takes strong stances against discrimination, we will be expected by Londoners and our staff to respect the rights of individuals to privacy and informed consent for medical treatments.

The mRNA vaccines have been touted as the best defence against COVID; however, “best” does not necessarily mean “good”. These vaccines don’t prevent the transmission or contraction of COVID and its variants, nor has it prevented fully vaccinated Londoners from becoming ill or dying of COVID. The protection wanes quickly, which is why there has been the call for (perhaps an endless series of) booster shots.

Fortunately, staff have taken numerous effective non-vaccine-centric actions to protect employees from COVID. The city manager reported that there had been very few cases among city staff under the current policy which has equal treatment for those with and without attestations for medical and human rights exemptions.

Any time a new variant of COVID emerges, there seems to be a panic and a fearful call for deeper restrictions, even if the variant appears less threatening. These restrictions have diminishing returns and unintended consequences. I assert that any gain our hospitals may have made by mandating vaccines for all their employees has been neutralized by the loss of experienced staff. If we impose more harsh restrictions on councillors and employees with attestations differently, we should also expect diminishing returns and unintended consequences.

I want our council policy to remain non-discriminatory. So, to ensure alignment, I suggest that staff revise their approach to treat those with attestations equally.

I intend to provide more robust support for the following motion on the added agenda. In the meantime, I hope that the committee will consider implementing the following motion:

That staff BE DIRECTED to ensure city COVID-related policies treat those with and without attestations no differently.

Sincerely,

Michael van Holst
Councillor, Ward 1