

# Good Health Through Life

*Sir Peter Bottomley MP*

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I, like many admire Novak Djokovic's tennis skills; I do not like his thinking and I regret his words on vaccinations, just as I could not understand a British prime minister and spouse declining to say if their infant had received protection from previously potentially devastating conditions.

The impressive results of applied science, medicine and politics have led to impressive levels of childhood immunisation through the NHS in the UK. Why politics? I thank three MPs in different parties for their contributions to our National Health Service: Christopher Addison, first minister of health in 1919 (then Liberal); Henry Willink, who as Conservative health minister in the wartime coalition government first held aloft the White Paper announcing the NHS; Labour's Nye Bevan, who decided family doctors would be independent businesses in 1948.

By first birthday, all our babies should have received protection from three jabs, each a 6-in-1 collection of vaccines. There are two more by second birthday and then annual flu vaccines for about eight years. There are pre-school vaccines and in early teens there is the HPV protection and a general teenage booster.

At 65 there is the pneumococcal vaccine; at 70, protection against shingles and annual flu jabs. Mothers-to-be should have the whooping cough vaccine from 16 weeks pregnant. Vaccines are also particularly important for people with underlying health conditions.

If you are starting college or university, make sure you have had the MenACWY vaccine, and two doses of the MMR as there are outbreaks of mumps and measles at university.

As there is no watershed for newspaper readers, I will not go further into anti-social transmission of undesirable conditions, beyond claiming some credit for the dramatic reduction in genital warts after I campaigned with clinicians to add protection at minimal cost when offering the cervical cancer vaccine. As and when any obituarist has a go at listing my foot faults, please suggest they add that as an ace that benefits many in generations to come.

May I thank those, some anonymous, who have written this week with gratitude for the further announcement of changes to the Building Safety Bill, now for debate in the House of Lords, and the successful passing of the Leasehold Reform (Ground Rent) Act which received Royal Assent earlier this month. Residential leaseholders are to gain extra protections from costs of unsafe cladding. It is a long, perhaps unending campaign to make homes safe and saleable.

I am glad to have dedicated myself to these campaigns on practical health and housing which can have a positive impact where it is vitally needed.

This past week I was pleased to attend the ground-breaking ceremony of Worthing's exciting Integrated Care Centre. It will bring together all helpful and necessary services under one roof in central Worthing.

We all share in a desire for a good place to live, a good place to work and for excellent healthcare facilities.

My team and I continue to pay close attention to increasing the provision of NHS dentists across Worthing and Arun. I contributed to an important and well attended Westminster Hall debate on access to NHS dentistry. Having been in touch with local dentists, I was able to share their concerns as well as those of local residents.

Prominent people including admired sports personalities, popular entertainers and perhaps leading politicians have the opportunity to be influencers for the good of all. Now, no one needs protection from Smallpox because science killed it. We can hope the same will be said of Covid-19 in years to come.