



Department
of Health &
Social Care

From the Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

██████████
London
SW1H 0EU
██████████

To all MPs

20 March 2021

Dear Colleague,

COVID-19 Vaccine Deployment Update

We are writing to you to update you on the latest important developments on our deployment of COVID-19 vaccines.

Today we have reached a major milestone. We have now vaccinated over half of all adults across the UK with the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. We know that they will soon develop strong protection from serious illness, saving thousands of lives and significantly reducing pressure on the NHS. To mark this achievement the iconic BT Tower in London will be lit up with the message of progress.

95% of people aged 65 and over, and 9 in 10 of those who are clinically extremely vulnerable have received their first dose. In addition to this 1,879,054 people have received their second dose.

This week we also sent out 2 million invites for people aged 50 or above to come forward and get a jab as we continued to expand the rollout. We have asked the NHS to focus on maximising uptake in the priority groups 1-9 before moving on to those in their 40s.

The analysis of routine testing data published by PHE earlier this week shows that one dose is around 60% effective against symptomatic COVID-19 disease in those aged over 80. This effect occurs from about 3 to 4 weeks after the first dose. Early data suggests the second dose in over 80s improves protection against symptomatic disease by a further 30%, to more than 85%.

As I set out in the House, a batch of doses has been delayed because of the need to retest stability and there is a delay in a scheduled arrival from the Serum Institute of India. As has been the case since the programme began, the number of vaccinations carried out over time will vary due to supply. We remain on track to meet our targets offering vaccines to JCVI priority cohorts 1-9 by 15 April and all adults by 31 July and we remain on track to hit the dates set by the Roadmap.

It is important to remember that all vaccines being used in the UK have undergone robust clinical trials and have met the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency's (MHRA) strict standards of safety, effectiveness and quality. Following suspensions by some countries of the COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca over suspected blood clots, the MHRA and the European Medicines Agency confirmed that the benefits of the vaccine in

preventing COVID-19 far outweigh the risks. It is very good to see many European countries re-starting their use of the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine.

We are also working to drive uptake, and harness the power of social media to tackle false information and encourage take up of life-saving vaccines among ethnic minorities, so we developed a toolkit and launched a new social media campaign supported by the world's biggest social media companies. The toolkit's content is designed to be shared via Whatsapp and Facebook community groups, as well as Twitter, YouTube and Instagram. As part of the campaign Love Island's star, Yewande posted her discussion with Dr Emeka Okorocho (A&E doctor) and Professor Kevin Fenton (Regional Director of PHE London and Public Health NHS London) on Instagram.

The latest statistical release for England can be found at the link below, including data at constituency level.

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/covid-19-vaccinations/>

Despite this success we know our NHS continues to be under serious pressure. So, it is vital that we all continue to follow the rules: stay home, protect the NHS, save lives.

Yours ever,



MATT HANCOCK



NADHIM ZAHAWI