

13 million top-up COVID-19 vaccines given across the UK

- A total of 13,147,333 people in the UK have received a COVID-19 booster or third jab
- Milestone comes as government accepts advice to extend booster programme to 40-49 year olds and new data shows boosters give over 90% protection against symptomatic COVID-19

More than 13 million life-saving booster jabs have been given across the UK, marking another significant milestone in the phenomenal COVID-19 vaccination programme.

A total of 286,582 top-up jabs were recorded in the UK on Tuesday, bringing the total to 13,147,333, providing crucial protection against the virus ahead of the winter months.

On Monday, 217,349 top-ups were recorded, with the programme jumping another million since it hit 12 million jabs on Saturday.

Yesterday the vaccination programme took another significant step, with the government accepting the advice from the independent experts at the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) to expand the booster programme to those aged 40-49. This means millions more people will be eligible to get their third dose.

Further milestones have also been hit today – with the Midlands being the first region to individually hit two million top-up jabs given.

New findings on Monday reinforced how vital the boosters are in maintaining protection ahead of winter, with the first UK real world study from the UK Health Security Agency showing that boosters give over 90% protection against symptomatic COVID-19 in adults over 50.

These findings show that two weeks after receiving a booster dose, protection against symptomatic infection in adults aged 50 years and over was 93.1% in those with Oxford/AstraZeneca as their primary course and 94.0% for Pfizer-BioNTech.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

There is not a second to waste in getting your booster jab – and it is fantastic to see more than 13 million people have now come forward to top-up their protection this winter.

I want to thank everyone who has come forward for their jab and the NHS and army of volunteers helping to get jabs in arms.

While we know immunity can wane after six months, new data

published this week shows a third dose boosts protection against symptomatic infection to more than 90% – showing just how important the booster is, so come forward for yours as soon as you can to protect yourself and your loved ones.

More than 50 million first doses and 46 million second doses have been given across the UK.

Following an update to the national booking service last week, booking a booster jab has never been easier. Those eligible for a top-up vaccine – people over 50, health and social care workers and those most at risk of COVID-19 – can pre-book their jab 5 months after their second dose, making it easier and more convenient to boost their protection into winter.

People will still receive their vaccine 6 months after their second dose, but the change will speed up the vaccination programme by allowing people to receive a jab the day they become eligible, rather than waiting for a convenient appointment.

Vaccines Minister Maggie Throup said:

It is excellent to see another million boosters clock up in the vital vaccine rollout with 13 million people across the UK boosting their protection ahead of winter.

To all those eligible – getting the booster could be the most important thing you do this Christmas as we look to spend more valuable time with our loved ones.

Vaccines give high levels of protection but immunity reduces over time, particularly for older adults and at-risk groups, so it is vital that vulnerable people come forward to get their COVID-19 booster vaccine to top-up their defences and protect themselves this winter.

The latest evidence from the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) shows that protection against symptomatic disease falls from 65%, up to 3 months after the second dose, to 45% 6 months after the second dose for the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine, and from 90% to 65% for the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine. Protection against hospitalisation falls from 95% to 75% for Oxford/AstraZeneca and 99% to 90% for Pfizer/BioNTech.

Although the vaccine effectiveness against severe disease remains high, a small change can generate a major shift in hospital admissions. For example, a change from 95% to 90% protection against hospitalisation would lead to doubling of admissions in those vaccinated.

The booster programme is designed to top up this waning immunity.

Dr Emily Lawson, head of the NHS COVID-19 Vaccination Programme, said:

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of NHS staff and volunteers, more than 11 million eligible people in England have already received their top-up jab in the eight weeks since the rollout began, with almost a quarter of a million boosters delivered yesterday alone.

The booster roll-out continues to go from strength to strength and in the last 24 hours almost 400,000 people have come forward and made an appointment for their life-saving covid vaccine or top-up.

As we head into winter I urge everyone who is eligible to take up the offer as soon as possible to protect yourself and those around you over the festive season.

COVID-19 booster vaccines have been delivered or booked in at every older adult care home in England where safe to do so, with almost 9 in 10 care homes already visited.

People are also able to book by calling 119 and can get vaccinated at hundreds of walk-in sites across the country without an appointment. Those eligible can use the NHS online walk-in finder to locate the most convenient site.

Last month, clinical guidance was updated to enable boosters to be given slightly earlier to those at highest risk, where this makes operational sense to do so. This includes care home residents who may have received their second doses at different times to be vaccinated in the same session, as long as it has been 5 months since their second dose. It may also help with other vulnerable groups, such as housebound patients, so that they can have their flu and COVID-19 vaccines at the same time.

Vaccine confidence is high, with data from the Office for National Statistics showing nearly all (94%) of those aged 50 to 69 say they would be likely to get their COVID-19 booster if offered, with the figure rising to 98% for those over 70.

Flu is another winter virus that can be serious. To give people the best protection over winter, those eligible for a free flu vaccine should come forward and book an appointment at either their GP practice or their local pharmacy, or take it up when offered by their employer or other healthcare provider.

The government has launched a nationwide advertising campaign, encouraging people eligible to get their booster and flu jabs to protect themselves and their loved ones and help reduce pressures on the NHS. This includes outdoor billboards, broadcast and community radio and TV.

The offer of a first and second COVID-19 vaccine remains open to anyone who is eligible. Vaccines are available free of charge and from thousands of vaccine centres, GP practices and pharmacies. Around 98% of people live within 10 miles of a vaccination centre in England and vaccinations are taking place at sites including mosques, community centres and football

stadiums.

There are more than 500 extra vaccination sites now compared to April this year, with 1,697 vaccination centres in operation in April 2021, and over 2,200 vaccination centres in operation now.

Vaccines are also available for those aged 12 to 15 to offer the best possible protection this winter in schools, as well as more than 200 vaccine centres.