

Government to introduce world-leading ban on shark fin trade

- Import and export of detached shark fins banned to promote shark conservation
- World-leading trade ban will extend to shark fin products including tinned shark fin soup
- Endangered and overfished species including shortfin mako and blue shark are among those to benefit from greater protections

The UK will go further than any other country to stop the cruel practice of shark finning International Ocean Minister Lord Goldsmith announced today, thanks to new legislation set to ban the import and export of shark fin products.

The UK has a strong track record in marine conservation and has been pressing for stronger international action to protect sharks against unsustainable fishing practices and shark finning, which is the practice of removing a shark's fins at sea and discarding the finless body back into the water.

Many species of shark face significant population pressures. Out of over 500 species of shark, 143 are listed as 'under threat' under the International Union for Conservation of Nature – with different species ranging from 'vulnerable' to 'critically endangered'. The presence and variety of sharks in marine areas acts as a key indicator for ocean health while the animals also play a vital role in marine ecosystems by helping to maintain healthy levels of fish below them in the food chain.

Demand for shark fin products is a significant driver for these pressures, alongside over-fishing. Banning detached fins from being brought into the UK will help to protect wild populations of shark species, such as the endangered short fin mako shark and overfished blue shark, which have both declined rapidly as a result of unsustainable fishing practices.

The ban will maintain the UK's position as a world leader in protecting animal welfare restricting the import of and export of detached shark fins as well as products which contain shark fins including soup and other products.

Animal Welfare minister Lord Goldsmith said:

Shark finning is indescribably cruel and causes thousands of shark to die terrible deaths. It is also unforgivably wasteful. The practice is rightly banned in UK waters, but the trade continues, with serious implications for the future of these magnificent creatures.

That is why we are now banning the import both of detached shark fins and shark fin products. Our action will not only help boost shark numbers, it will send a clear message that we do not support

an industry that is forcing many species to the brink of extinction

The UK is a global leader in marine protection, with our 'blue belt' programme protecting an area of ocean around British Overseas Territories the size of India, as well as plans to pilot Highly Protected Marine Areas in our domestic waters. The UK is also leading a global campaign, supported by over 80 countries, for at least 30% of the world's land and ocean to be protected by 2030.

Ali Hood, Director of Conservation for the Shark Trust said:

The Shark Trust welcomes the prohibition in trade in detached fins as the next action in a history of proactive moves by the UK Government, which supported leaving fins naturally attached as best practice years before adoption of the policy by the EU in 2013.

It is encouraging to see the UK addressing the fin trade as an element of overfishing: the principal threat to sharks and rays. And we're noting that the UK is ramping up its engagement in domestic and international shark conservation issues, currently championing the science-based advice for a prohibition on mako in North Atlantic high-seas fisheries.

Shark Conservationist James Glancy said:

New measures from the UK Government to protect sharks from the cruel shark fin trade are welcomed by conservationists.

The unsustainable rate at which sharks are caught by global fishing fleets, as bycatch or deliberately for their fins and meat, has caused a significant decline in worldwide shark populations.

Sharks have been around for millions of years and play a crucial role for the health of our oceans yet, as a consequence of human activity, many shark species are critically endangered and face extinction in some regions.

We will continue to champion conservation measures for sharks through Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (the international organisations which regulate fishing activities on the High Seas) and under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) which prohibits or requires trades to be carefully regulated. This ban represents another important step in our journey to delivering better shark conservation globally.

Today's announcement is part of the Government's plan to eradicate cruel practices and improve standards both domestically and overseas as set out in

our [Action Plan for Animal Welfare](#).

Press release: Government to introduce world-leading ban on shark fin trade

The UK will ban the import and export of detached shark fins and products containing them.

All young people aged 16 and 17 in England to be offered vaccine by next week

- Health and Social Care Secretary announces new target to offer first dose of COVID-19 vaccine to all 16 and 17 year olds in England by Monday 23 August
- Walk-in centres now open across the country and thousands of young people already vaccinated
- New walk-in site finder launched online to help young people locate nearest vaccination centre

All young people aged 16 to 17 in England are to be offered a first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by Monday 23 August to give them the vital protection provided by the vaccine before returning to school in September, the Health and Social Secretary Sajid Javid has announced today (15 August).

Tens of thousands of people in this age group have already been vaccinated at local vaccination sites and walk-in centres across the country and the drive to offer a first jab by the new date will allow those teenagers in that age bracket the two weeks necessary to build maximum immunity.

NHS England has launched a new online walk-in site finder to help 16 and 17 year olds locate the nearest available centre. Further sites will come online over the coming days and weeks.

People aged 16 and 17 will be able to get vaccinated at one of more than 800 GP-led local vaccination sites. Thousands will be invited including by text and letter to book their appointments through GPs or via walk-in centres to help keep them, their families and friends safe from the virus.

The vaccines have already saved around 84,600 lives and prevented 23.4 million infections and 66,900 hospitalisations in England up to 6 August, according to the latest data from Public Health England and Cambridge University.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

It is brilliant to see tens of thousands of young people have already received their vaccine – thank you for helping to further build our wall of defence against COVID-19 across the country.

I have asked the NHS in England to ensure they offer a first dose of the vaccine to everyone aged 16 and 17 by next Monday 23 August, this will make sure everybody has the opportunity to get vital protection before returning to college or sixth form.

Please don't delay – get your jabs as soon as you can so we can continue to safely live with this virus and enjoy our freedoms by giving yourself, your family and your community the protection they need.

Teenagers within three months of turning 18 can book their vaccine appointment online through the National Booking Service or by calling 119. Around 100,000 texts are being sent to those eligible inviting them to book their jabs.

Children aged 12 to 15 who are clinically vulnerable to COVID-19 or who live with adults who are at increased risk of serious illness from the virus are also being contacted by the NHS and invited for their vaccine by 23 August, ahead of the new school year.

Vaccines Minister Nadhim Zahawi said:

Young people have shown great enthusiasm to get their vaccines and this has allowed us to safely enjoy the things we have missed, such as going to the pub or seeing family and friends.

Thank you to the NHS and volunteers for your continued dedication to protect people from this virus. I urge everybody else to get their vaccines as soon as possible.

Data from Public Health England (PHE) shows COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective against hospitalisation from the Delta (B.1.617.2) variant, the dominant strain in the UK. The analysis shows the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is 96% effective and the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine is 92% effective against hospitalisation after two doses.

A total of 87,421,381 doses have been administered in the UK, with 47,215,352 people receiving a first dose (89.3%) and 40,206,029 people receiving both

doses (76%). More than 70% of people aged 18-29 have already received their first dose.

The government is working closely with the NHS to make it as easy as possible to get a vaccine, including through 'grab a jab' pop-up vaccine sites across the country, such as London-based nightclub Heaven, as well as football stadiums and festivals up and down the country.

Advice and information on the benefits of vaccination have been shared at every opportunity, including through a range of partnerships with industries catering for predominantly younger audiences.

This work has included partnerships with high-profile entertainment and sports personalities on short films encouraging people to get the jab, such as film stars Jim Broadbent and Thandiwe Newton, and football figures Harry Redknapp and Chris Kamara.

The government has also partnered with dating apps, social media platforms and large companies, such as Uber and Deliveroo, on adverts and incentives to get the vaccine.

NHS medical director of primary care and deputy lead for vaccination programme in England, Dr Nikki Kanani, said:

Thanks to the dedication and hard work of NHS staff, well over 39 million people in England have already had their first, including more than a quarter of a million young people under the age of 18.

Now as teenagers prepare to head back to school or college or into their first full-time jobs, once again NHS staff are doing everything they can to offer young people the lifesaving vaccine as quickly as possible to protect themselves and others. Those who are eligible should check their nearest walk-in centre on the site finder today or book through their GP team once invited to do so.

YouGov polling also shows the UK continues to be one of the top nations where people are willing to have a COVID-19 vaccine or have already been vaccinated. ONS data published on 9 August shows that more than 9 in 10 (96%) adults reported positive sentiment towards the vaccine, and vaccine hesitancy for those aged 18 to 21 has almost halved from 9% to 5%. The statistics also showed hesitancy has decreased for those aged 16 and 17 from 14% to 11%.

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.

- People aged 16 and 17 can find their nearest walk-in vaccination centre on the [NHS website](#).
- People with three months of their 18th birthday and all over-18s can

[book an appointment](#) on the NHS website.

- The latest UK-wide vaccination statistics are published [here](#) and NHS England publishes vaccine statistics for England [here](#).
- The latest PHE analysis on the efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines is available [here](#). Their latest study on the number of cases prevented and lives saved by vaccines is [here](#).
- The ONS survey on 'Barriers to COVID-19 vaccination' can be found [here](#).
- Further ONS stats on vaccine hesitancy can be found [here](#).
- The YouGov data comparing uptake rates in countries around the world is available [here](#)

[Nicaragua: UK Statement on Elections](#)

News story

Foreign Office Minister Lord Goldsmith has issued a statement on the elections in Nicaragua.



Lord Goldsmith said:

The steps taken by President Ortega and Vice President Murillo, to prevent free and fair elections in Nicaragua, are a clear abuse of power. The regime's attempts to stifle opposition, including banning all opposition parties, will deny Nicaraguans their right to vote for a candidate of their choosing.

With opposition figures detained, including seven potential presidential candidates, and a crackdown of fundamental rights and freedoms, November's elections will lack credibility.

This increasing authoritarianism must end. The rule of law and the rights of the Nicaraguan people must be respected with free and fair elections restored. The UK will continue to work with its partners to encourage a peaceful and democratic outcome.

Cost of NHS travel tests to be reduced and private provider list reviewed

The cost of NHS Test and Trace tests for international arrivals will now be reduced from £88 to £68 for one test and private testing providers will be reviewed