

British public urged to play their part in historic vaccine roll out

- Public urged to join the national effort by helping family and friends aged 80 and over to get their life-saving jabs
- Government calls on the public to commit to 3 pledges to support the roll out of COVID-19 vaccines
- Around 45% of people aged 80 and over have now been vaccinated and over one million have been offered a jab at an NHS vaccination centre

The NHS has vaccinated around 45% of those aged 80 and over in England and is encouraging people who have been offered a vaccine to book their appointments as soon as possible. Over one million people aged 80 and over have now been invited to book their jab at one of England's NHS vaccination centres.

Helping vulnerable people to get their vaccinations is one of three pledges the government has asked the public to make to support the largest vaccination programme in British history.

The 3 pledges are:

- Help out – help those aged 80 and over by supporting friends, family and loved ones with their appointments, as well as volunteering to help those in the community
- Join up – sign up to clinical trials for COVID-19 vaccines and treatments
- Stay informed – keep up to date with accurate and trusted NHS advice and make sure to share facts with friends and family

By taking part in one or more of these pledges, members of the public can join the national effort and support the NHS as the vaccination programme continues to expand.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

Throughout this pandemic, I have been in awe of how much the British public has contributed to the fight against the virus. I want to thank everyone for the time, effort and patience they have put in to keep themselves and others safe.

We recognise that so many people want to support our NHS so health and care workers can continue to save lives, and now is your chance to get involved by helping the remaining people aged 80 and over get their jabs.

I urge everyone, no matter who you are, what you do or where you're from, to come forward and take on our three pledges. Everyone has a part to play in this national effort – to protect our NHS, our loved ones and other people's loved ones too.

The 3 pledges are:

Help out

The NHS is working tirelessly to offer vaccinations to the most vulnerable as quickly as possible, and remains on track to reach the government's target of vaccinating the top four cohorts – those over the age of 70, care home residents and staff, NHS workers and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals – by 15 February.

People eligible for vaccination will be contacted by letter or text, inviting them to their appointments, and the NHS has stood up vaccination sites in local communities across the country – from GP surgeries and hospitals, to pharmacies and large-scale vaccination centres. It has also worked to deliver vaccines to thousands of care homes.

The single most important thing everyone should do is stay at home and follow the current national restrictions – by doing this, people will help stop the spread, protect the NHS and, therefore, save lives.

The public can help with vaccination efforts by encouraging relatives, friends and neighbours aged 80 and over to book their vaccination appointments and helping them with forward planning. For those who live with people getting their vaccinations, they can also support with transport to and from the vaccination sites. It is essential strict social distancing is maintained at all times and people follow Hands, Face, Space.

There are also a number of opportunities to support at-risk people in the community and help ease pressures on local NHS services while it continues to rollout the programme. This includes the [NHS Volunteer Responder](#) scheme, delivered by the Royal Voluntary Service in partnership with NHS England and GoodSAM. Through the scheme, people can undertake a range of tasks, including shopping and prescription collection, supportive 'check in and chat calls' and transport to and from vital medical appointments.

NHS Volunteer Responders will also be supporting the vaccination programme as Steward Volunteers. Volunteers who have already offered their support will be contacted when they are needed.

Case study

Liz Parry, an NHS Volunteer Responder, has so far completed 490 shopping and prescription collections for vulnerable people in her community. She said:

We all need to pull together to keep our communities safe and

defeat this virus.

Volunteering is without a doubt the most rewarding thing I have ever done and it's so humbling to be part of the team making a difference to people in need.

Join up

There are a number of [ongoing clinical trials](#) for both vaccines in development and promising treatments for COVID-19 which the government urges people to take part in to support the pandemic response.

Clinical trial volunteers have played a crucial part in the pandemic response so far, helping the NHS roll out both of its vaccines quickly and safely, as well as treatments already saving lives across the NHS – such as dexamethasone and tocilizumab.

Case study

Yusuf, a Transport for London worker, volunteered to take part in the Novavax vaccine study after losing a close colleague and a member of his family to the disease. He said:

Once you know someone who's been affected by COVID-19, it makes a difference.

I didn't have an opportunity to volunteer during the first lockdown, so this is my way to be a part of the efforts to help London and to help Britain get through this.

He called volunteering for the trial a 'really positive experience' and urged other people to 'step up', particularly those who are also from the Caribbean community who, evidence shows, are disproportionately impacted by the virus.

Stay informed

One of the most important things people can do to support the vaccine effort is to make sure they and the people around them are fully equipped with the latest NHS vaccine advice. People can keep up to date through the official NHS website and if a family member, close friend or acquaintance is offered their vaccine, encourage them to take it and make sure they have access to official advice.

The public should also watch out for COVID-19 vaccine email scams, reporting any suspect emails to the Suspicious Email Reporting Service. This is following reports of cyber criminals using the vaccine to lure people into sharing personal details.

Chief Executive of Royal Voluntary Service, Catherine Johnstone CBE said:

We are incredibly thankful to all of the volunteers who have stepped forward so far to help us keep communities safe through the pandemic. With vulnerable people once again being asked to stay at home and shield, we have seen an increase in requests for support and now, more than ever need more volunteers to join us.

We would like to urge anyone who can to please support your community with vital tasks such as shopping and prescription collection and medical transport so we can keep people safe and support the NHS.

Background

Links on how to get involved in the three pledges can be found below:

- Help out
- Join up
- Stay informed
 - read the [latest NHS vaccine advice](#)
 - people can report suspect emails they've received but not acted upon to the Suspicious Email Reporting Service (SERS), by forwarding them to report@phishing.gov.uk
 - those who have provided personal or financial details, or transferred any money as a result of a suspicious email, should report what has happened to Action Fraud as soon as possible by calling 0300 123 2040 or through the Action Fraud [website](#)

Since the start of the pandemic, Royal Voluntary Service partnered with NHS England and GoodSAM to deliver the NHS Volunteer Responder scheme.

NHS Volunteer Responders provides essential support to vulnerable people across England and since March volunteers have delivered 1.4million tasks for those in need in the community.

The NHS scheme, delivered in partnership with Royal Voluntary Service and GoodSAM has so far enabled 360,000 on-duty volunteers to complete 1.4 million vital tasks for those needing help in the community.