

Chief Medical Officer urges public to Get Boosted Now

- Part of new multimedia marketing blitz as booster rollout accelerates to offer all adults in England a jab by end of the year
- This comes as new milestone hit with 24 million boosters given in UK and 75% of over 50s boosted
- Data shows booster is needed to protect against the Omicron variant

Chief Medical Officer for England Professor Chris Whitty will call on the public to get a booster vaccination, in a nationwide advertising campaign launching today (Tuesday 14 December) to further galvanise the booster programme.

This comes as a total of 24 million boosters and third doses have now been administered in the UK.

75% of over 50 year-olds across the UK have had their booster or third dose and over 1 million people have booked a booster vaccination appointment since the National Booking Service opened yesterday to people aged over 30 in England. The booking service will expand to all adults in England tomorrow.

The NHS in England experienced its busiest Monday ever for vaccinations yesterday (Monday 13 December) since the rollout began in December last year and 418,000 boosters were delivered yesterday alone, with 185,000 of these delivered by community pharmacies.

The latest preliminary data has shown vaccine efficacy against symptomatic infection is substantially reduced against Omicron with just two doses, but a booster pushes protection back up to over 70%, showing how vital the top up jab is to bolster immunity.

In the advert, Professor Whitty says:

There is a new variant of COVID-19 – Omicron – which is highly infectious and spreading fast.

Every adult in the country needs to get a COVID-19 booster vaccine.

Boosters give you the best possible protection against the virus and should significantly reduce your risk of serious illness and hospitalisation.

Get your COVID-19 booster vaccine to strengthen your protection.

Please, get boosted now.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Sajid Javid, said:

We know a booster jab increases protection against the Omicron variant and in our race against the virus it's crucial everyone gets their top-up jab.

Our heroic NHS staff and volunteers are working around the clock to speed up our vaccination programme, helping millions of people to get boosted now – so play your part, roll up your sleeves and get protected.

Data suggests Omicron is extremely transmissible and is rapidly becoming the dominant variant as cases double every 2 to 3 days. The Chief Medical Officer is encouraging “every adult in the country” to get a booster vaccine and strengthen their protection.

The UK has the fastest booster rollout in Europe, with over 23 million people having received their boost so far, but to stay ahead in this race against the virus the booster programme is opening up to give every adult the chance to get their booster before the New Year.

To boost the booster programme the government and the NHS are:

- Opening new vaccination sites across the country, including pop up and mobile sites
- Increasing opening times of vaccination sites to 7 days a week
- Asking GPs and pharmacies to do more vaccinations
- Bringing in 750 Armed Forces Personnel and 41 military planners in every region to help coordinate the national effort