

COVID-19 vaccines have prevented thousands of deaths in older adults, new data shows

Public Health England (PHE) analysis indicates that [the COVID-19 vaccination programme prevented 6,100 deaths](#) in those aged 70 and older in England up to the end of February.

From 8 December 2020 to the end of January 2021, over 4 million vaccine doses were given to adults aged 70 and over. The analysis compared the observed number of deaths with the number of deaths that would have been expected, if the vaccine hadn't been given during this time period. To allow for the time taken to develop an immune response to vaccination, the analysis assumed it would take 31 days before the effect of vaccination on deaths is observed. Using this method, PHE estimates that around 6,100 deaths were prevented to the end of February – 5,900 in those aged 80 and over and 200 in those aged 70 to 79.

Expected deaths with COVID-19 were estimated using real-world data on how effective the vaccines are at preventing death and vaccine uptake.

The results are very similar to those estimated by Warwick University (also published in today's report), which used a different approach to model the number of deaths with and without the vaccination programme. Warwick University's estimate suggested that the programme has prevented around 6,600 deaths across all age groups.

Matt Hancock, Health and Social Care Secretary, said:

Vaccines save lives. This work shows vaccines have already saved over 6,000 lives among the most vulnerable in our society. These results give us hope and remind us about the importance of getting the jab as soon as we are eligible.

Millions of people will soon be getting their second doses – giving them the strongest possible protection against COVID-19. I urge everyone to come forward for the vaccine when it's your turn, to protect yourself and your loved ones.

Dr Mary Ramsay, PHE Head of Immunisation, said:

We have shown previously that the COVID-19 vaccinations are hugely effective at stopping people from getting the infection. This new analysis calculates how many lives they have saved in the first few months of the vaccine programme, and with every additional day more lives have and will be saved. The vaccines have an excellent safety

record and I would encourage anyone who is offered a vaccine to take it as soon as possible.

While the vaccines have a striking impact on mortality, we don't yet know how much these vaccines will reduce the risk of you passing COVID-19 onto others. Even if you have been vaccinated, it is really important that you continue to act like you have the virus, practise good hand hygiene and stay at home.

If future evidence shows that vaccines do help to reduce transmission, then it is likely that an even higher number of deaths will have been prevented.

The true value of these vaccines may also be in terms of future deaths avoided, should there be resurgence of COVID-19 in the UK in the future. Older age presents the single greatest risk of death from COVID-19 – prioritisation of the COVID-19 vaccination programme has focused primarily on an aged-based strategy in order to prevent the greatest loss of life possible.