

F1 stars including Lewis Hamilton back COVID-19 vaccine drive

- Formula 1 (F1) drivers Lewis Hamilton, Lando Norris and George Russell and CEO of F1 Group Stefano Domenicali, urge fans to get the COVID-19 vaccine this winter
- A new short film encourages fans to play their part and get boosted
- Campaign comes as the over 40s can now have top-up jab 3 months after second dose
- The film is released ahead of the F1 season finale in Abu Dhabi

Formula 1's biggest stars have backed the UK's vaccine rollout and urged all fans to get their jab as soon as possible this winter in a new film out today (Saturday 11 December).

The film shows current champion Lewis Hamilton, and other F1 drivers Lando Norris and George Russell, ask fans to play their part and get their COVID-19 vaccine.

[Watch the new film](#)

Stefano Domenicali, CEO of F1 Group, also features in the film, telling fans he has received his booster jab and encouraging everyone who is eligible to get theirs.

This comes as the booster programme is accelerated this week, with people aged over 40 in England now able to book their booster a month in advance – 2 months after their second dose – following the government halving the dosing gap between second doses and boosters to just 6 months.

Vaccines are the best way to protect people against COVID-19 and, in light of the new Omicron variant and following advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), the government is expanding the booster programme to all adults over 18, with all those eligible in England being offered a top-up jab by the end of January.

To speed up the vaccination programme, around 450 military personnel will be drafted in to support deployment, with 1,500 community pharmacy sites, additional hospital hubs, and pop-up sites opening in convenient locations across the country. Extra financial support to GPs, community pharmacies and primary care staff will help boost capacity and encourage more visits to those who are housebound.

Stefano Domenicali, Formula 1 CEO said:

Vaccines and boosters are out way out of this pandemic, and we need to keep everyone safe and move forward together. I have had my vaccine and my booster and ask everyone to do the same. Formula 1 is moving ahead, and we ask for everyone to play their part.

The government's priority remains to protect the most vulnerable first so everyone over the age of 40 who received their second dose at least 3 months ago now able to book an appointment for their booster jab.

Younger age groups will be invited by the NHS in order of age in due course.

Vaccines Minister Maggie Throup said:

Boosters remain the best defence against the new variant and the virus, and we are bolstering the booster programme to get more jabs in arms more quickly.

It is fantastic to see F1 drivers playing their part, encouraging others to get their top up jab to secure the vital protection they need as the virus goes on the advance this winter.

More than 21 million people have received their booster jab and I urge all those eligible to come forward, roll up their sleeves and get protected as soon as they can.

Vaccinated people are far less likely to get COVID-19 with symptoms and are even more unlikely to get serious COVID-19, to be admitted to hospital, or to die from it.

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.

The first real-world study on the effectiveness of booster vaccines against the Delta variant by the UK Health Security Agency shows top-up jabs boost protection back up to over 90% against symptomatic COVID-19 in adults aged over 50, 2 weeks after being vaccinated. Data from the CovBoost trial shows the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines being used in the UK as boosters give the best overall immune response.

The most recent data suggests that Omicron has a very high growth rate and is spreading rapidly. Recent laboratory data suggests that there is lower immunity against Omicron from vaccination when compared to the Delta variant, so that 2 doses of a vaccine is less effective at reducing transmission in the community, and early research published by Pfizer suggests that a third dose of the Pfizer vaccine neutralised the Omicron variant to levels that are

similar to the impact of 2 doses against the original strain of the virus.

The government will continue to look closely at all the emerging data but vaccines remain the best line of defence and it is now more vital than ever that those who are unvaccinated come forward, and those eligible for their boosters book when called.

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 is running 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.

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For further information please contact vaccines@freuds.com.