

Health and Social Care Secretary's statement on coronavirus (COVID-19): 11 January 2021

Good afternoon and welcome back to Downing Street for today's coronavirus briefing.

I'm joined by Professor Steve Powis, the National Medical Director of NHS England.

Before I turn to our vaccine delivery plan, which we've published today, I wanted to go through the latest coronavirus data.

As we know, the new strain of this virus is highly contagious, and it is putting our NHS under very significant pressure.

Yesterday 46,169 positive cases of coronavirus were recorded across the whole of the UK.

As the slide shows, 32,294 people are currently in hospital with coronavirus – that's across the UK and as you can see that is up sharply, it's up 22% from this time last week.

The average number of deaths reported each day over the past week is 926.

And our hearts go out to the family and the loved ones of each and every person who has died of coronavirus.

As the Chief Medical Officer said earlier today, we are at the worst point of this pandemic, and you can see that from this slide and from the increase in the number of people in hospital.

So the NHS, more than ever before, needs everybody to be doing something right now and that something is to follow the rules.

Now, I know there's been speculation about more restrictions.

And we don't rule out taking further action if it's needed.

But it's your actions now that can make a difference. Stay at home. And please reduce all social contact that is not absolutely strictly necessary.

That's what's needed.

Act like you have the virus.

And it's all the more important to do this because the vaccine rollout is now proceeding at pace and we all know that this is the way out of the pandemic.

I am determined, as I have been for almost a year now, to drive this

vaccination programme as fast as is safely possible.

I'm determined to ensure every adult in this country has the chance to be vaccinated.

And that as many as possible take up that chance to be vaccinated.

Vaccines are important and I care about vaccines because I want our country to get back to normal as fast as possible.

I want us to have that great British summer.

And my team and I are working hard to deliver this as fast as possible, both to save lives and to make people safe and to protect the NHS and reduce the very significant pressures it's under right now.

I wanted to bring you up to speed with the very latest statistics on vaccination.

So far, across the UK we've given 2.6 million doses to 2.3 million people.

And we've protected more people through vaccinations than all other countries in Europe put together.

Today I'd like to take you through the details of our [UK COVID-19 vaccines delivery plan](#) that we've just published.

It sets out how we will build on this work that's been done so far, and put in place the biggest vaccination programme in British history.

There are 4 parts to the plan.

The first is supply.

I've always believed in British science, and that it can find the solutions to get us out of this.

For a year now we have been working to develop and buy vaccines for everyone in the UK.

Thanks to our investment in Ebola and MERS vaccines several years ago, the Jenner Institute at Oxford University was able to repurpose existing work, and move so fast to develop a successful vaccine.

But our search has been global throughout, so while we've backed the scientists who've been working on this here at home, we've also worked with international partners like Pfizer and BioNTech, to ensure that we were the first country in the world to authorise, and use the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine.

And of course the Moderna vaccine has now been authorised and is ready to bring on stream.

I want to thank all those involved, but this work is not yet done.

The supply of the vaccine is currently the rate limiting step.

And we will bring forward as much vaccine as becomes available.

And we must ensure that we have the vaccine development and manufacturing capabilities in this country for the future too.

The next part of the plan is prioritisation, this has been much discussed.

The plan sets out how we prioritise the vaccine so that we can protect those at greatest clinical risk. And one simple statistic explains why this is important.

The top 4 priority groups account for 88% of the deaths from COVID.

This stark fact explains why we must prioritise according to clinical need – to save lives – and because that is the fastest route to safely lifting restrictions.

We are on track to deliver on our pledge to offer a first vaccine to everyone in the top 4 cohorts by the 15th of February.

I want to give you an update on progress.

Two-fifths of over 80s have now received their first dose.

Care home residents are of course in the very top priority group.

In the last few days, since the Oxford vaccine was approved for use in primary care on Thursday morning, we have significantly accelerated the care home vaccination rollout.

Almost a quarter of older care home residents have now received their first dose of the vaccine.

We are committed to reaching every care home resident this month.

And I want to see as much of that as possible as soon as possible.

I'm incredibly grateful to everybody working in social care.

Whether in care homes, or domiciliary care, for everything they are doing to keep the people who are the most vulnerable to COVID, to keep them safe right now.

This is not easy, but it is vital. And it is vital too that when the vaccine reaches your care home, everyone, everyone, residents and staff alike steps forward and gets that jab.

Each of these jabs helps save lives. And we're making this happen as fast as we can.

The plan sets out how we will continue through the clinically prioritised groups, and beyond.

So all adults can be offered a vaccine by the autumn.

The third part of the plan is expanding where you can be vaccinated.

As of Friday, 96% of the population in England lived within 10 miles of a vaccination site and we're expanding the number of vaccination sites further, right across the whole of the UK, with the devolved NHS responsible for delivery in each of the 3 devolved nations, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

This expansion will include community pharmacy and roving vaccination centres, on top of the hospitals, GP practices, and the 7 mass vaccination centres, that we have opened, including the one I visited today at Epsom.

This huge expansion means that by the end of January everyone will live within 10 miles of a vaccination centre, either fixed or roving in England. And this will help us make sure that everyone can get access to the vaccine that's so important.

The final part of this plan is about the people who will make it happen.

Over the past few months, we have recruited and trained an 80,000 strong vaccination workforce.

I am incredibly grateful to all who have stepped forward.

Including people from all parts of the NHS:

And so many volunteers who have come forward for their country.

Thank you for your service.

And I'm very grateful to the many offers of support we're receiving right now, and for all those who are in training as this vaccination rollout expands.

So that is the vaccine delivery plan. It is an incredibly important piece of work.

But while this crucial work takes place, each and every one of us must keep pushing back against this virus

By following the rules that are in place.

Please do your bit and help keep the NHS strong

While we roll up our sleeves and make this ambitious plan a reality.

So please, stay at home to protect the NHS and save lives.