

Leading social media platforms unite to support COVID-19 vaccine drive

- Collaboration comes as all adults aged 18 and over invited to get a jab
- Filters and a range of stickers will be available on Snapchat from today
- Other platforms will host live question and answers with medical experts providing vaccine advice

Leading social media platforms popular with young people including Snapchat, Reddit, TikTok, and YouTube, are supporting the vaccination programme by encouraging their users to get coronavirus (COVID-19) jabs.

The partnerships come as all adults aged 18 and over are invited to receive a vaccine in England as the vaccination programme continues at unprecedented pace and scale.

Snapchat users can use NHS stickers, a filter, and later this month, an augmented reality lens that all read: 'I've had my vaccine' for UK users to share on their accounts.

The platform is also hosting a series of question and answers with medical experts on the Prime Minister's snapchat account. The most recent took place on Saturday 19 June with Dr Kiren Collison, the interim Deputy Medical Director for Primary Care for NHS England, who answered questions from the public about the vaccine.

Snapchat has also expanded its: 'Here For You' feature which provides in-app resources to people looking for more information around health, mental health and wellbeing. When someone searches for 'COVID-19', 'vaccine', 'NHS' and 'vaccination', they will have access to expert NHS resources on the vaccine to make sure they are well informed, build confidence and tackle misinformation.

The activity supports the NHS 'every vaccination gives us hope' campaign encouraging younger people to get their vaccine and join the millions of people who have already received their jabs.

The government met its target of offering a vaccine to the most vulnerable by 15 April and is on track to offer a first dose to all adults by 19 July, 2 weeks earlier than planned. NHS England has extended the offer of a vaccine to all adults.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

With the offer of the vaccine now extended to all adults in England, we are leaving no stone unturned to boost uptake and encourage everyone to get the jab when eligible.

I am delighted that Snapchat, Reddit, TikTok and YouTube – some of

the most influential social media platforms – are coming together to support the biggest and most successful vaccine effort in NHS history.

We're accelerating our vaccine programme on the road to recovery and I urge everyone to come forward for the offer, roll up their sleeves and join the millions that already have the fullest possible protection from 2 doses.

Digital Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

Our vaccine rollout has been a great success story and is now available to all adults.

We have worked closely with social media platforms throughout the pandemic to promote life saving vaccine information, and this new initiative with popular platforms will help drive take-up even higher.

We are also tackling misinformation online through our new Online Safety Bill to make sure people are not bombarded by harmful content.

The community network platform Reddit has hosted 2 live 'ask me anything' sessions on its coronavirus forum, featuring experts such as Dr Amalina Bakri answering questions from Downing Street. Reddit will continue to host question and answers over the coming weeks to help people access factual and reliable information from a range of experts.

TikTok's support for the vaccine rollout includes adding the NHS 'I've had my COVID vaccine' stickers to its library for users to share, and working with Team Halo – a group of scientists using the platform to provide the latest information on vaccines with entertaining and shareable videos.

Vaccines Minister Nadhim Zahawi said:

I'm thrilled that some of the leading social media platforms are joining forces to boost vaccine uptake among younger people. This is another incredible asset to our vaccination programme, which is already saving lives.

The vaccine is our way out of this pandemic and we have made incredible progress so far with more than 4 in 5 adults receiving at least one dose and all adults being invited.

I encourage everyone to get the jab – it could stop you becoming seriously ill and protect your loved ones.

Ed Couchman, UK Regional General Manager at Snapchat, said:

With Snapchat playing a key part of the lives of young people around the world, we're thrilled to collaborate with the government to make sure they have accurate and trusted resources to stay safe, healthy and informed.

As well as creative tools, it's great to be expanding our in-app health and wellbeing support portal with NHS resources about the vaccine and to host question and answer sessions with key government officials from the Prime Minister's official Snap Star account.

As we enter this next phase of the COVID-19 recovery in the UK, we continue to explore new ways we can collaborate with trusted partners and organisations to help support the health and wellbeing of our Snapchat community.

In collaboration with the NHS, YouTube has rolled out a video campaign with the tagline: 'Let's Not Go Back' to remind its core 18 to 34-year-old audience of the importance of being vaccinated through messaging that speaks to their personal experiences from a year in lockdown.

The campaign is running on YouTube, and on national billboards and bus stop advertising, and on social media. Collectively, these information panels have served over 400 billion impressions worldwide.

Ben McOwen Wilson, UK Managing Director at YouTube, said:

We are delighted to have been able to support the NHS with our 'Let's Not Go Back' campaign to encourage young people to get vaccinated. From billboards to bus stops, online and off, we reached young people wherever they are to raise awareness of the key role they have to play.

It has been fantastic to witness the public response to our national initiative and to have seen the rates at which young people have stepped up. We will continue to work to combat the pandemic by using YouTube's extensive reach among young people to help in this critical national effort.

Dr. Jessica Ashooh, Director of Policy for Reddit said:

Building bridges between policymakers, industry experts, and online communities is central to how we elevate authoritative vaccine information on Reddit.

Our partnership with 10 Downing Street has enabled us to promote quality COVID-19 resources for Redditors in the United Kingdom.

Last year Digital Secretary Oliver Dowden and Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock agreed new measures with social media platforms to limit the spread of false vaccine information and help people find the information they need about any COVID-19 vaccine.

At a virtual roundtable, Facebook, Twitter and Google committed to the principle that no company should profit from or promote false information about COVID-19 vaccines, to respond to flagged content more swiftly, and to work with authorities to promote scientifically accurate messages.

The government has also developed a toolkit with content designed to be shared via WhatsApp and Facebook community groups, as well as Twitter, YouTube and Instagram, to tackle false information about the vaccine.

Earlier this year we announced that Facebook and Instagram are backing a new nationwide social media campaign launched by the government and the NHS for people to show their support for the vaccine roll out. The initiative allows users to update their profiles with a range of specially-designed profile frames and graphics. People can use these to show 'I've had my vaccine' or make a pledge that 'I will get my vaccine'.

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