

Over eight million people in the UK receive COVID-19 booster jabs

Over eight million people have now received their COVID-19 booster jab, the latest figures show today (Monday 1 November 2021), ensuring the protection they've secured from their first two doses is maintained over the winter months.

Today's figures follow hundreds of thousands of vaccinations over the weekend, with more than 820,000 administered since Friday. People who are eligible are also able to get a booster at hundreds of walk-in sites across the country from today, as long as it's been six months since their second dose.

A total of 8,115,229 people have received their booster jab in the UK. 45,712,351 people have received two doses (79.5%) and 48,790,855 people have received one dose (84.8%).

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

More than eight million people across the UK now have the vital protection boosters provide, keeping them and their loved ones safe over the coming months.

It's never been easier to get your boost with walk-in sites across the country now open for those eligible – if it's been six months since your second dose, get your booster as soon as you can.

The colder weather traditionally leads to increased transmission of viruses and will be challenging for the NHS.

Vaccines give high levels of protection but immunity reduces over time, particularly for older adults and at-risk groups, so it is vital that vulnerable people come forward to get their COVID-19 booster vaccine to top-up their defences and protect themselves this winter.

The latest evidence from SAGE shows that protection against symptomatic disease falls from 65%, up to 3 months after the second dose, to 45% six months after the second dose for the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine, and from 90% to 65% for the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine. Protection against hospitalisation falls from 95% to 75% for Oxford/AstraZeneca and 99% to 90% for Pfizer/BioNTech.

Although the vaccine efficacy against severe disease remains high, a small change can generate a major shift in hospital admissions. For example, a change from 95% to 90% against hospitalisation would lead to doubling of admissions in those vaccinated.

The booster programme is designed to top up this waning immunity. Early results from Pfizer show that a booster following a primary schedule of the same vaccine restores protection back up to 95.6% against symptomatic infection.

Last week, clinical guidance was updated to allow COVID-19 boosters to be given earlier to those at highest risk, where this makes operational sense to do so. This includes care home residents who may have received their second doses at different times to be vaccinated in the same session, as long as it has been five months since their second dose. It may also help with other vulnerable groups, such as housebound patients, so that they can have their flu and COVID-19 vaccines at the same time.

Vaccines Minister Maggie Throup said:

With over 820,000 boosters administered over the weekend, the programme continues at pace, now providing over eight million vulnerable people with protection.

I encourage everyone eligible to get their booster and flu jab as soon as possible to keep them safe over the winter period.

Vaccine confidence is high with data from the Office for National Statistics showing nearly all (94%) of those aged 50 to 69 say they would be likely to get their COVID-19 booster if offered, with the figure rising to 98% for those over 70.

People will be invited for the COVID-19 booster jab when it's their turn – if they have not been contacted within a week of reaching six months since their second jab they can call 119, book online or walk into various sites across the country.

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 has launched a nationwide advertising campaign, encouraging people 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.

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 and vaccinations are taking place at sites including mosques, community centres and football stadiums.

There are more than 500 extra vaccination sites now compared to April this

year, with 1,697 vaccination centres in operation in April 2021, and over 2,200 vaccination centres in operation now.

Vaccines are also available for those aged 12-15 to offer the best possible protection this winter in schools, as well as over 100 vaccine centres.

Dr Nikki Kanani, deputy lead for the NHS vaccination programme, said:

The NHS COVID-19 vaccination programme continues at pace with eight million booster doses delivered across the UK, including more than 6.8 million in England alone.

Hundreds of thousands of people continue to book in for their vital boosters with a further 1.7 million invites due to land this week and the NHS has now opened up hundreds of walk-in sites across the country so people can get their top-up protection without delay.

The booster is not simply a nice to have – it will provide important extra protection as we go into the winter period. So if you have been invited or a family or friend has been invited – please do come forward.