

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

Over seven million of the UK's most vulnerable people have now received their COVID-19 booster jab, the latest figures show today (Friday 29 October 2021).

The new milestone follows a record-breaking week of booster jabs being administered, with more than two million in the last seven days alone.

More than half of over 50s eligible for a booster in England have now also taken up the offer, ensuring the protection they've secured from their first two doses is maintained over the winter months.

A total of 7,293,638 people have received their booster jab in the UK. 45,651,222 people have received two doses (79.4%) and 49,882,904 people have received one dose (86.7%).

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

Our life-saving booster vaccines are ensuring millions are protected over the winter – and it's fantastic that more than seven million people have now received their third jab.

This is a national mission and with over two million bookings in just one week, our booster programme is accelerating as more and more people become eligible. My thanks goes to the brilliant NHS staff and volunteers who are behind this huge effort to build our wall of defence.

I urge everyone eligible to get their booster as soon as they can – and you can now book online or ring 119 once it's been six months and one week since your second dose.

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, it should be noted that a small change can generate a major shift in hospital admissions (e.g. 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.

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 or book online.

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.

Vaccines Minister Maggie Throup said:

It is excellent to see over seven million people have now had a booster, which are protecting the most vulnerable this winter.

Vaccines are vital over the colder months as viruses spread more easily from person to person, so if you're eligible for a booster jab or you're yet to come forward for your first or second jab, make sure to book it as soon as possible to protect yourself and those around you.

Last week, the government 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.

TV adverts asking people to "get vaccinated, get boosted, get protected" have aired this week at primetime spots, including during the Great British Bake Off, a Premier League football match and soaps such as Emmerdale and Coronation Street.

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:

Booster vaccines are by far our best protection against the virus as we head into winter and it is fantastic to see enthusiasm continue to grow as more people become eligible, with millions of life-saving top-ups delivered across England already.

It is testament to the hard work of NHS staff and volunteers that only six weeks into the NHS vaccine programme, half of eligible over 50s and almost two-thirds of eligible over 80s have already received their booster vaccination. I had my booster at my local pharmacy and I would urge anyone, as soon as they can, to come forward and book their all-important protection.