

People urged to get COVID-19 boosters as almost 10m people jabbed

- Sajid Javid calls on families and friends to support their loved ones to get vaccinated
- It comes as almost 10 million people in the UK have received their top-up vaccines, with three million extra invites being sent next week

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid has called for the UK to come together to help vaccinate those most vulnerable to COVID-19 with booster jabs.

He called on families and friends to support elderly loved ones and those most at risk of the virus to get their vaccines urgently to ensure they are protected over the winter months – which will save lives, reduce the pressure on the NHS and ensure the UK can continue to live with COVID-19 without restrictions.

It comes as almost 10 million people in the UK have received their top-up jabs, with seven in 10 over 80s and three in five over-50s in England already boosted.

NHS England will be inviting another three million people who will become eligible for their booster next week. More than 13 million invites, including texts, letters and emails, have already been sent to eligible people in England so far asking them to book their booster online through the National Booking Service. The additional letters due to land next week will mean around 16 million invites have been sent in England since the NHS booster programme began.

COVID-19 booster vaccines have been delivered or booked in at every older adult care home in England where safe to do so, with almost nine in 10 care homes already visited.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

Almost 10 million people in the UK have received their COVID-19 booster and third jabs – a phenomenal achievement in under two months. As we approach this milestone, I want to thank those who have come forward and urge everybody across the nation to get vaccinated, get protected and get boosted.

We know immunity begins to wane after six months, especially for the elderly and the vulnerable, and booster vaccines will top-up their protection to keep people safe over the winter.

I strongly urge everybody who is eligible for a COVID-19 booster or flu vaccine to take up the offer as soon as you can. For those not yet eligible, please help your parents, grandparents or vulnerable loved ones get their jabs – it could save their life.

And if you haven't yet had your first and second vaccines, it is not too late – the NHS will always be there to welcome you with open arms.

This truly is a national mission. If we all come together and play our part, we can get through this challenging winter, avoid a return to restrictions and enjoy Christmas.

The National Booking Service will be updated tomorrow (Monday 8 November) to allow those eligible for a booster vaccine – people over 50 and those most at risk of COVID-19 – to pre-book their jab five months after their second dose.

People will still receive their vaccine six months after their second dose, but the change will speed up the vaccination programme by allowing people to receive a jab the day they become eligible, rather than waiting for a convenient appointment.

People will also be able to book by calling 119 and can get vaccinated at hundreds of walk-in sites across the country six months after their second dose without an appointment. Those eligible can use the NHS online walk-in finder to locate the most convenient site.

The latest evidence from SAGE shows that protection against symptomatic disease falls from 65%, up to three 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.