

Prime Minister to set out plan for living with Covid

- New plan for living with Covid to be set out this week
- Prime Minister expected to confirm all regulations that restrict public freedoms will be repealed
- Vaccines and other pharmaceutical interventions will continue as first line of defence
- All remaining domestic covid regulations that restrict public freedoms are expected to end this week as part of the Living with Covid Plan.

The Prime Minister has been clear that the pandemic is not over but we must learn to live with Covid. Thanks to our improved understanding of the virus and successful vaccination programme we can now move away from government intervention to personal responsibility.

Surveillance systems and contingency measures will be retained to stand up if needed, such as increased testing capacity or vaccine programmes to respond to new variants.

The pandemic was the biggest public health emergency in a century and led to unprecedented challenges.

Lockdowns and other non-pharmaceutical interventions were necessary to save lives and protect the NHS as scientists and clinicians worked on a global scale to detect and respond to new variants, but they took a significant toll on lives and livelihoods.

For example, restricting face to face education has resulted in detrimental effects to children's learning, mental health, development, and future earning potential. Mental wellbeing has been adversely impacted, particularly among young people and those living in deprived neighbourhoods.

The government and its advisors were clear from the start that vaccines were our way out of this pandemic. The UK was the first in the world to authorise the use and roll out the Pfizer and Oxford/Astrazeneca vaccines, with the first jab given in December 2020.

Since then, nearly 53 million people or 91% of the UK population have had one dose, and nearly 49 million or 85% a second. New treatments continue to be rolled out including antivirals that significantly reduce the risk of severe disease or death.

Vaccines, testing and public health guidance meant we were able to complete our Roadmap to unlocking England in 2021, and respond effectively to the Omicron variant over winter.

Plan B was implemented to slow its spread and get more jabs in arms. A successful campaign was launched – Get Boosted Now – offering all adults a

booster dose by the New Year. Nearly 38 million boosters have now been administered. This, coupled with improved scientific understanding, meant restrictions were avoided and Government intervention in people's lives can now finally end.

Pharmaceutical interventions, led by the vaccination programme, will continue to be our first line of defence and will remain open to anyone who has not yet come forward. The government will continue to be guided by JCVI advice on any necessary future vaccination programmes.

Public responsibility and an awareness of public health guidance should remain, as with all infectious diseases such as flu.

Further detail will be set out next week. The plan is expected to focus on:

- Removing regulations and requirements while emphasising public health advice, in line with long standing methods of managing a range of infectious diseases
- Protecting the vulnerable through pharmaceutical interventions and testing, in line with other viruses
- Maintaining resilience against future variants with ongoing surveillance capabilities
- Securing innovations and opportunities from the Covid response

Prime Minister, Boris Johnson said:

Covid will not suddenly disappear, and we need to learn to live with this virus and continue to protect ourselves without restricting our freedoms. We've built up strong protections against this virus over the past two years through the vaccine rollouts, tests, new treatments, and the best scientific understanding of what this virus can do.

Thanks to our successful vaccination programme and the sheer magnitude of people who have come forward to be jabbed we are now in a position to set out our plan for living with covid this week.