

Prime Minister to set out plans ahead of step 4

- Findings from certification and social distancing reviews to be published
- Cases continue to rise but link between hospitalisations and deaths weakened
- Prime Minister expected to reiterate that we must carefully begin to learn to live with this virus

The Prime Minister will host a press conference this afternoon (Monday 5th July) to set out plans for the final step of the Roadmap in England, giving businesses and the public more time to prepare.

The Health and Social Care Secretary will announce the plans to Parliament.

Step 4 is expected to begin on Monday 19th July if the government's "four tests" for easing COVID restrictions have been met. This will be confirmed on Monday 12th July following a review of the latest data.

The latest data and scientific modelling suggest that cases will continue to rise as restrictions are eased, but the link to hospitalisations and deaths has been weakened due to the vaccination programme.

As of 2 July, there were 27,714 new positive cases in England. 331 people were admitted with COVID-19 and there were 1,611 patients in hospital. The latest ONS estimates show that 1 in 260 people have COVID-19 in England.

Next steps on the 1m plus rule, face coverings, and working from home will be set out, alongside the findings of the social distancing and certification review. An update will also be provided on the next steps for care home visits.

The Prime Minister is expected to reiterate that COVID will become a virus that we learn to live with as we already do with flu. This means that hospitalisations, serious illness and deaths from COVID will continue, albeit at a much lower level than before the vaccination programme.

To continue to receive the best possible protection against COVID, all adults are encouraged to get two vaccine doses. As of 4 July, over 78 million vaccine doses have now been administered in the UK, and 63.4% of adults have received two doses.

Step 3 was delayed by up to 4 weeks so every adult could be offered a vaccine, around two thirds of adults could receive a second jab, and more data could be assessed on the new Delta variant which is now dominant in the UK.

Data from Public Health England now shows that COVID vaccines are highly

effective against severe illness and hospitalisation from this variant. The analysis suggests the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is 96% effective, and the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine 92% effective against hospitalisation after two doses.

The government is ensuring preparations are in place to offer third “booster” doses to everyone aged over 50 and the most vulnerable to boost their immunity over the winter months, based on interim advice from the JCVI. Final advice is expected in the coming months.

Our red list border control regime, surge testing, community testing and genome sequencing are effective ways of finding and isolating new cases of variants and will continue to be deployed.

The Prime Minister is expected to praise the efforts of the nation in getting this virus under control, while urging for caution while cases continue to rise and more people receive the greatest possible protection from two jabs.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

Thanks to the successful rollout of our vaccination programme, we are progressing cautiously through our roadmap. Today we will set out how we can restore people’s freedoms when we reach step 4.

But I must stress that the pandemic is not over and that cases will continue to rise over the coming weeks.

As we begin to learn to live with this virus, we must all continue to carefully manage the risks from COVID and exercise judgement when going about our lives.