

# Prime Minister to urge caution ahead of move to step 4

The Prime Minister will host a press conference this afternoon (Monday 12th July) to confirm whether England can move to step 4 of the Roadmap.

Step 4 is expected to begin on Monday 19th July if the government's "four tests" for easing Covid restrictions have been met.

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

The four tests are:

- The vaccine deployment programme continues successfully
- Evidence shows vaccines are sufficiently effective in reducing hospitalisations and deaths in those vaccinated
- Infection rates do not risk a surge in hospitalisations which would put unsustainable pressure on the NHS
- Our assessment of the risks is not fundamentally changed by new Variants of Concern

The Prime Minister is expected to urge the public to remain vigilant and exercise caution, praising the efforts of the country for the progress made so far while warning that the pandemic is not over and that caution will be key in the coming weeks.

The latest data will be presented, with current modelling suggesting that Covid cases will continue to rise as restrictions are eased. Hospitalisations, serious illness and deaths will also continue, albeit at a much lower level than before the vaccination programme.

As of 10th July, a total of 80.3 million vaccine doses have been administered in the UK, with 45.7 million adults receiving a first dose (86.9%) and 34.5 million adults receiving both doses (65.6%).

The move to step 4 was delayed by up to four weeks so every adult could be offered a vaccine. 6.8 million first and second doses have already been administered in England during the delay so far.

The delay has also moved the probable end of restrictions to a point closer to the school summer holidays, when transmission is expected to be lower. Reopening at a point later in the year may increase pressure on the NHS because of winter illnesses such as flu

Analysis from Public Health England (PHE) and the University of Cambridge suggests that vaccines have so far prevented an estimated 8.5 million infections and 30,000 deaths in England alone.

It is vital that people keep coming forward to get both jabs when called, with data from PHE showing COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective against

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

The vaccination rollout will continue to accelerate by bringing forward second doses for under 40s to eight weeks – meaning the entire population will benefit from maximum protection more quickly.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

We are tantalisingly close to the final milestone in our roadmap out of lockdown, but the plan to restore our freedoms must come with a warning.

While the phenomenal vaccine rollout has offered every adult some protection against the virus, and the crucial link between cases, hospitalisations and deaths is weakened, the global pandemic is not over yet.

Cases will rise as we unlock, so as we confirm our plans today, our message will be clear. Caution is absolutely vital, and we must all take responsibility so we don't undo our progress, ensuring we continue to protect our NHS.