

Prime Minister's statement on coronavirus (COVID-19): 10 February 2021

It is five weeks since we set ourselves the target of vaccinating almost 15 million of the most vulnerable people in the country, and the aim was – and is – clear to everyone.

By offering the prospect of protection from Covid to everyone 70 and over, to all frontline NHS and care staff, to older care home residents and staff and to all those who are clinically extremely vulnerable, we can do the most, the fastest, to reduce the incidence of death and serious illness.

And, with less than a week to go until the target date of Monday 15th, there is no doubt that we have made great strides, with just over 13 million people now vaccinated in our United Kingdom, including 1 in 4 adults in England, over 90 per cent of everyone over 75 and over 90 per cent of eligible residents of care homes for the elderly.

But that still leaves nearly 2 million people – a population roughly twice the size of Birmingham – that we still hope to reach.

And there are people across the country who for one reason or another haven't yet taken up their offer.

So now is the moment to do it, wherever you are – you won't be more than about 10 miles away from a vaccination centre.

So, go online, or get someone to help you or simply pick up the phone and call 119.

And let me appeal to the fantastic social care workers we all rely on to look after our relatives, our parents and grandparents.

If you have not received a letter, please contact your employer and fix it up.

And let me stress that these vaccines are safe and effective, and it was good to see the World Health Organisation today confirm its support for the Oxford/Astra Zeneca vaccine for use in everyone over the age of 18 and, obviously, anyone over 65, and also supporting the 12-week interval between the two doses. Indeed, they say the longer interval provides greater protection.

And the reason I make this appeal today, for people to come forward in those groups and get vaccinated, is not so we hit some numerical target, but to save lives, prevent serious illness, and so the whole country can take another step on a long and hard road back to normality.

And, as the data comes in, I'll be saying more about that – including setting out the roadmap – over the next two weeks.

I think the people of this country absolutely understand the importance of protecting the most vulnerable first and that is what we are doing.

And, if we can keep the pace up and keep the supplies of vaccines up, we hope to reach everyone in cohorts 1 to 9 by the end of April.

And I want to thank all of those involved for their heroic efforts: the doctors, nurses, military medics, local authorities, transport planners, warehouse operatives, delivery drivers, countless volunteers, often working through the night or even digging out snowed-in vaccination centres, like the community effort at Alwoodley Medical Centre in Leeds last Saturday so GPs, nurses and their teams could deliver 1,200 doses that day.

And I want to thank the millions of people who have received their vaccinations and, with cases still high and the pressures on our NHS still severe, I want finally thank everyone, all of you who are continuing to follow the rules and urge you once again to stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives.

Thank you.