

Prime Minister's statement on coronavirus (COVID-19): 5 January 2021

Good afternoon,

I want to update everybody about vaccines

because across this entire country today there are people – everybody – making another huge sacrifice.

Teachers and pupils coping with online learning

Businesses who have borne the brunt of successive lockdowns and, of course, the amazing staff of our NHS and our care workers who are grappling with a new variant – this new variant – of coronavirus.

And I believe that when everybody looks at the position people understand overwhelmingly that we have no choice

when the Office of National Statistics is telling us that more than 2 per cent of the population is now infected

- that's over 1 million people in England –

and when today we have reported another 60,000 new cases

and when the number of patients in hospitals in England is now 40 per cent higher than at the first peak in April.

I think obviously – everybody, you all – want to be sure that we in government are now using every second of this lockdown to put that invisible shield around the elderly and the vulnerable in the form of vaccination

and so to begin to bring this crisis to an end.

And I can tell you that this afternoon

- with Pfizer and Oxford/AstraZeneca combined – as of this afternoon

we have now vaccinated over 1.1 million people in England and over 1.3 million across the UK.

And that includes more than 650,000 people over 80

- which is 23 per cent of all the over 80s in England –

And that means that nearly 1 in 4 of one of the most vulnerable groups will have in 2 to 3 weeks – all of them – a significant degree of immunity.

And when you consider that the average age of Covid fatalities is in the 80s

You can see the importance of what we have already achieved.

And that is why I believe that the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation was right to draw up a programme aimed at saving the most lives the fastest.

So by February 15th, as I said last night, the NHS is committed to offering a vaccination to everyone in the top four priority groups including older care home residents and staff, everyone over 70, all frontline NHS and care staff and all those who are clinically extremely vulnerable.

And to help us with meeting this target we already have 595 GP-led sites providing vaccines, with a further 180 coming on stream later this week.

We have 107 hospital sites – with a further 100 later this week

So that is almost a thousand sites – vaccination sites – across the country by the end of this week

And next week we will also have 7 vaccination centres opening in places such as sports stadia and exhibition centres.

We know that there will still be long weeks ahead in which we must persevere with these restrictions

but I want to give you – the British people – the maximum possible transparency about this vaccine roll out with more detail on Thursday and daily updates from Monday so that you can see day by day

and jab by jab

how much progress we are making.

Thanks very much I am now going to hand over to Chris to do the slides.