

# Public encouraged to register for COVID-19 vaccine trials as 100,000 already sign-up

- Over 100,000 people have signed up for future COVID-19 vaccine clinical trials through the NHS COVID-19 vaccine research registry
- volunteers are helping speed up efforts to find a safe and effective vaccine in the fight against coronavirus
- UK researchers urge more volunteers across all groups to sign-up, especially the over 65s and those from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds

Over 100,000 people have volunteered to take part in COVID-19 vaccine trials, helping to speed up efforts to discover a safe and effective vaccine.

The government is today (Monday 17 August) encouraging more people to join the thousands of volunteers and sign up to the [NHS COVID-19 Vaccine Research Registry](#) to help the NHS in the fight against coronavirus and ensure potential candidates work for everyone.

To enable large-scale vaccine studies to take place across the UK, the aim is to get as many people as possible signed up to the Registry by October.

Researchers particularly welcome people from all parts of society, especially those who are more likely to benefit from a vaccine, including the over 65s, frontline health and social care workers, and those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.

Clinical studies with a diverse pool of volunteers will help scientists and researchers better understand the effectiveness of each vaccine candidate and will considerably speed up efforts to discover a safe and workable vaccine.

Business Secretary Alok Sharma said:

From John O'Groats to Land's End, everyone has played their part in tackling coronavirus from wearing face coverings to following social distancing guidance.

Scientists and researchers are working day and night to find a vaccine that meets the UK's rigorous regulatory and safety standards, but they need hundreds of thousands of people of all backgrounds and ages to sign-up for studies to speed up this vital research.

I urge everyone to play our part in the fight against coronavirus and join the 100,000 people who have already registered, so we can help save and protect millions of lives.

Chair of the government's Vaccines Taskforce Kate Bingham said:

Protecting those at risk is the only way we will end this pandemic. That's why we are working as quickly as possible to run clinical studies on the most promising vaccines to see whether they offer protection against COVID-19, whilst adhering to the UK's strict safety and regulatory processes. And we need people throughout the UK to sign up to the registry to help us achieve this.

Getting 100,000 volunteers on board is a great start but we need many more people from many different backgrounds that we can call on for future studies if we are to find a vaccine quickly to protect those who need it against coronavirus.

Consultant Respiratory Physician and Director of the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) PRC, Bradford, Dinesh Saralaya said:

The best way to protect us from future outbreaks is to develop effective vaccines. Several vaccine trials are being conducted around the UK in the coming months and it is important that we all sign up to be contacted about them.

I would like to reassure people that research trials and studies are strictly regulated for ethics and safety. They are conducted within the framework of the NIHR, which is the research partner of the NHS, and we take every precaution to safeguard participants taking part. This includes appointments in settings like sports halls close to where people live and work rather than in hospitals.

By working together, we can produce efficient vaccines which are likely to protect all sections of our society from this dreadful virus in future.

18-year-old Mariam Zumeer from Bradford, who was hospitalised after contracting COVID-19, has first-hand experience of the benefits of taking part in clinical trials. During her time in intensive care, she was offered the opportunity to take part in the national [RECOVERY trial](#), which is testing a range of potential treatments for COVID-19. This includes the drug dexamethasone, which was found to be the first drug to be effective when treating those who are critically ill with the virus.

RECOVERY trial volunteer Mariam Zumeer said:

I will always be grateful for being encouraged to sign up. I remember my dad at the time urging me to take part, not just for myself but for the wider community. The result has been really positive for me and I would encourage others to do their bit in helping us all in the fight against coronavirus.

Chief Medical Officer Professor Chris Whitty said:

I'm very grateful to those who have volunteered for researchers to contact them to take part in COVID-19 vaccine studies, via the NHS COVID-19 vaccine research registry. The more people who volunteer to take part the more likely we find an answer to whether any vaccine is effective.

Having 100,000 volunteers in just four weeks shows the selflessness of the public and is testament to the speed of work done by the Vaccines Taskforce, National Institute for Health Research and others to make signing up possible.

I urge people to continue to sign up. It is important that we have people from different backgrounds and ages as volunteers, so that the vaccines that are developed work for everyone.

A number of trials in the UK are expected to begin this autumn, working with the NHS, research institutions and businesses, helping to develop and manufacture the vaccines.

Launched on 20 July, the NHS COVID-19 Vaccine Research Registry is an online service allowing members of the public to register their interest in COVID-19 vaccine studies and be contacted to participate in future clinical trials.

Vaccines are tested in stages to ensure they are safe and effective. Volunteers who are contacted to take part in trials will be given information about what stage a particular vaccine is at and details of how it has already been tested. They will be able to consider this when deciding to take part and people can withdraw from the registry at any point.

The Registry has been developed by the government, in partnership with the NIHR, NHS Digital, the Scottish and Welsh governments and the Northern Ireland Executive.

## **About the Vaccine Taskforce**

The Vaccine Taskforce (VTF) was set up under the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) in May 2020, to ensure that the UK population has access to clinically effective and safe vaccines as soon as possible, while working with partners to support international access to successful vaccines. This is to place the UK at the forefront of global vaccine research, development, manufacture and distribution.

The Vaccine Taskforce comprises a dedicated team of private sector industry professionals and officials from across government who are working at speed to build a portfolio of promising vaccine candidates that can end the global pandemic. It is chaired by biotech and life sciences expert Kate Bingham, who was appointed by the Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

The Vaccine Taskforce's approach to securing access to vaccines is through:

1. procuring the rights to a diverse range of promising vaccine candidates to spread risk and optimise chances for success;
2. providing funding for clinical studies, diagnostic monitoring and regulatory support to rapidly evaluate vaccines for safety and efficacy; and
3. providing funding and support for manufacturing scale-up and fill and finish at risk so that the UK has vaccines produced at scale and ready for administration should any of these prove successful.

## **About the NIHR**

The [National Institute for Health Research \(NIHR\)](#) is the nation's largest funder of health and care research. The NIHR:

- funds, supports and delivers high quality research that benefits the NHS, public health and social care
- engages and involves patients, carers and the public in order to improve the reach, quality and impact of research
- attracts, trains and supports the best researchers to tackle the complex health and care challenges of the future
- invests in world-class infrastructure and a skilled delivery workforce to translate discoveries into improved treatments and services
- partners with other public funders, charities and industry to maximise the value of research to patients and the economy

The NIHR was established in 2006 to improve the health and wealth of the nation through research and is funded by the Department of Health and Social Care. In addition to its national role, the NIHR supports applied health research for the direct and primary benefit of people in low- and middle-income countries, using UK aid from the UK government.