

Supply chain workers crucial to vaccination programme to receive jabs

- Move aims to protect continuity of the supply chain to help ensure flow of COVID vaccines for most vulnerable
- Crucial workers in roles such as manufacturing, fill and finish and batch testing will be offered vaccines

Up to 2,000 people working in roles crucial to the continuity of the COVID-19 vaccine supply chain will be offered jabs to help ensure the UK gets the doses it needs to protect the most vulnerable, the government has announced.

Highly trained workers who have been identified by the government as being irreplaceable and crucial to the delivery of vaccine supplies will be offered vaccines.

This will reduce the risk of an outbreak that would disrupt the immediate supply chain, which could have a significant impact on the largest vaccination programme in British history.

Those eligible include staff working for Pfizer and AstraZeneca involved in specialist UK roles, such as those making the vaccine substance, working on fill and finish and batch testing, as well as those involved in end-to-end coordination who are responsible for getting doses to the right place at the right time.

While each supplier follows strict COVID-secure guidelines, the nature of the job and the close proximity of staff means infections cannot be ruled out.

Each supplier has contingency plans to ensure continuity of production in the event of an outbreak, however the government is taking further action to minimise the risk of disruption.

Some workers at sites such as Oxford Biomedica which manufactures and tests the bulk of the UK's AstraZeneca supply will be eligible, and some staff at Wockhardt involved in fill and finish will also be included.

Eligible workers will be identified by their employer against clear government criteria and the most appropriate location for vaccination would be agreed between the NHS, local providers and employer.

This has been agreed by all 4 nations and will be implemented across the UK.

People with similar key roles working in the supply chain for the seasonal flu vaccine are already among the first to be offered the flu jab – to protect continuity of their critical contribution in the vaccination programme.