

# Update on vaccination to protect against monkeypox in England

Latest figures confirm that over 25,000 people have been vaccinated with the smallpox vaccine, as part of the strategy to contain the monkeypox outbreak in the UK. These thousands of vaccines, administered by the NHS to those at highest risk of exposure, should have a significant impact on the transmission of the virus.

While anyone can get monkeypox, cases in the UK are predominantly in gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM), with the virus being passed on in closely connected sexual networks, and so the smallpox vaccine is being prioritised for those men at higher risk of getting the virus, as well as some contacts of cases and some healthcare professionals.

As of 10 August, around 27,000 people\* have been vaccinated by the NHS and in sexual health services in England, including 25,325 GBMSM. The remainder are those who have received the vaccine as part of the healthcare worker programme, and contacts of cases.

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has secured one of the highest number of doses in the world to manage the current outbreak, procuring 150,000 doses for the UK from the global manufacturer of smallpox vaccines. The initial delivery of around 50,000 doses – the maximum amount immediately available – has been rolled out at pace to provide as much protection to as many eligible people as possible.

There are global issues with supply due to vaccine availability and the necessary time to produce more vaccines. This means the further batch of 100,000 doses, which are being made to order, will be received later in September. UKHSA is working with the manufacturer to expedite delivery as early as possible.

Out of the just over 50,000 doses that have arrived, about 40,000 have been made available to the NHS in England for distribution as part of the pre-exposure programme for GBMSM, for contacts of cases and for some healthcare workers. Around 6,000 have been allocated to Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Crown Dependencies.

By the end of next week UKHSA will have allocated all of the remaining stock (around 5,000 doses as of 11 August) that is currently in the country to the NHS. At the same current rapid rate of delivery in NHS services, the majority of these doses will have been delivered to those identified to be at higher risk by the end of the month.

Until the delivery of further doses in September, the NHS and local partners will continue to vaccinate in line with any residual supplies, and to ensure that those who are not already in touch with services know where and how to access vaccination.

Sexual health services will keep a record of those eligible so that they can be invited forward for vaccination as soon as new supply becomes available.

UKHSA will continue to work with partners including Terrence Higgins Trust, and a wide range of other partners, to ensure people in the GBMSM community know the signs and symptoms of monkeypox, how to seek help if they have concerns and how to access vaccination.

If you think you may be eligible for a vaccination, please wait to be invited by the NHS.

Latest case figures show that the outbreak is beginning to slow with 3,017 cases across the UK; latest data shows 29 cases a day are now confirmed on average (1 to 7 August), compared to 52 cases a day during the last week in June. Whilst this is a positive sign, ongoing vigilance is urged, given it's too soon to determine if this slowing will be sustained.

Dr Jenny Harries, Chief Executive of UKHSA, said:

The most important way to protect those who are more likely to get monkeypox and to limit the outbreak is to ensure that all the vaccines available to us are in people's arms as quickly as possible and are building protection across the community.

I'd like to thank all those who have isolated as part of this outbreak in order to limit transmission of the virus, the thousands of people who have come forward for vaccination and all those in the NHS and sexual health services who have ensured the rapid delivery of the available vaccine – this has strengthened our response to the current outbreak and should interrupt chains of transmission.

Jim McManus, President of The Association of Directors of Public Health, said:

Directors of Public Health are playing our part in efforts to deliver the vaccine to those who need it and we will continue to do so as long as stocks are available. We are also working with UKHSA and a range of partners nationally to help ensure that when more doses arrive, we will be able to deliver them as quickly, fairly and efficiently as possible.

In the meantime, it is vitally important that gay and bisexual men continue to access sexual health services, who are working incredibly hard to respond to the current outbreak of monkeypox alongside offering their usual services.

Dr Claire Dewsnap, British Association for Sexual Health and HIV (BASHH) President, said:

It's fantastic that thousands of vaccines have been delivered, we thank individuals in at-risk communities for stepping up to be vaccinated and services making huge efforts to get vaccine out. We have been advised that the next currently planned delivery of vaccine won't be available until late September. BASHH is concerned about the time it will take to receive more vaccines and will continue to work hard with national agencies to make sure the next round of delivery is as smooth as possible.

While you are waiting for your vaccine, or if you have just received one, please remain alert to the symptoms of monkeypox, especially if you have had a new or multiple sexual partners. Symptoms can take up to 3 weeks to develop, so keep checking yourself after intimate contact with others. If you feel unwell, please speak to a sexual health service.

If you are a contact of a case – whether you have been notified by a health protection team or directly by a previous partner – please take a break from sex and intimate contact.

No vaccine is 100% effective. While the vaccine may not always prevent an individual getting monkeypox, the symptoms experienced are likely to be milder. The first dose prepares your immune system so it can respond much more quickly if you come into contact with monkeypox.

The vaccine also takes time to work. Protection will start to build after a few days and should reach highest levels after about 4 weeks.

Common signs and symptoms of monkeypox infection include fever, headache, muscle aches, exhaustion, swollen lymph nodes, and development of a new rash. This could be a single blister like spot (or a small number) on the genitals, anus and surrounding area, lesions in the mouth, and symptoms of proctitis (anal or rectal pain or bleeding).

In July, UKHSA [guidance for close contacts of a confirmed monkeypox case](#) was updated. Based on the growing evidence of how the monkeypox virus is being passed on in this outbreak, most close contacts no longer have to isolate for 21 days unless they develop symptoms.

\*For reference, as of 10 August 2022, a total of 25,325 vaccines had been administered via sexual health services to people at highest risk of infection. A further 2,295 doses had been administered to healthcare workers or community contacts of cases (data up to 8 August 2022).

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**[Cabinet ministers see levelling up in](#)**

# action at Airbus factory

The Prime Minister, Chancellor and Secretary of State for Wales have visited the Airbus factory in North Wales, where they saw the positive impacts of investment on jobs in the region and committed to helping families with the cost of living.

The ministers met a number of apprentices on Friday 12 August and discussed how improving skills and job prospects is vital in driving economic growth and levelling up across the UK.

In response to the latest GDP figures out today, which show the economy contracting by 0.1% in the three months to June, the Chancellor reaffirmed that it is his "top priority" to work alongside the Bank of England to get inflation under control and grow the economy.

The visit comes as stats show that over 7 million bank accounts across the UK have received the first £326 cost of living payment, with a further £324 to come in the autumn. Workers across Wales also saw a cut in their National Insurance contributions last month, representing savings of £396 million across households this year.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

It is companies like Airbus who are driving forward economic growth, levelling up and supporting thousands of highly skilled jobs for people up and down the United Kingdom.

It was fantastic to visit their Broughton site in North Wales – the world's largest wing manufacturing plant – to see their work in action and hear from apprentices at the start of their careers at Airbus.

We will continue to help people across the country to find good jobs and support them through the cost of living challenges.

Chancellor of the Exchequer Nadhim Zahawi said:

It's great to be here in Wales to meet such enthusiastic and talented apprentices.

I know times are tough and people in Wales are concerned about rising prices. That's why the government is providing an unprecedented £37 billion worth of support to help households, including a £400 discount on energy bills for every household in Wales this winter.

But it's important to remember there are pockets of optimism – the

unemployment rate in Wales is at a historically low level, and businesses like Airbus are announcing huge new investments, which will boost people's prospects in the region.

The UK recovered strongly from the pandemic, with the fastest growth in the G7 last year, and I'm confident that we can also overcome the global challenges we now face.

Secretary of State for Wales Sir Robert Buckland said:

During extremely challenging times, the UK Government is focused on growing the economy and increasing opportunity for people across Wales.

Alongside the support we are providing to Welsh households, it is fantastic to see a company like Airbus investing in its workforce with its plans to create 550 jobs, build on its apprenticeship programme and boost its production facilities in Broughton.

Airbus Senior Vice President and Head of Broughton Plant, Jerome Blandin, said:

It was fantastic for the Prime Minister, Chancellor and Secretary of State for Wales to visit our site in Broughton today and meet some of our wonderful staff.

Airbus has invested heavily in its workforce and facilities in North Wales, the South West and around the UK, contributing significantly to the government's levelling up agenda. We have trained more than 1,100 apprentices over the last ten years and spend about £250 million each year on Research and Development here in the UK.

In May, Airbus announced an increase in the production rate of our single aisle commercial aircraft to an unprecedented 75 A320 Family aircraft per month by November 2025. For the UK, this means we will increase our workforce in North Wales by 550 and invest an additional £100 million in additional production facilities by 2025 to meet this increased global demand.

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## [Clearing a path to higher education](#)

Ahead of the release of A-Level results on Thursday (18th), the Student Loans Company (SLC) is sharing its top tips for prospective students going through Clearing this year.



It's predicted that this year's Clearing window will be busier than ever, due to a range of factors, including an increase in the number of 18-year-olds heading to university or college as well as a return to a more normal academic year following Covid. SLC is encouraging students not to wait to apply for student finance, even if they don't have a confirmed course place yet.

With a processing time of up to six to eight weeks, eligible students who are applying for higher rates of maintenance loans or for additional grants may not receive their full funding entitlement at the start of term. However, in these circumstances SLC will award the Tuition Fee Loan and the minimum amount of Maintenance Loan before the start of the course, while it confirms household income and any other relevant details. Students will get the remainder of their maintenance and any other funding entitlement as a top up payment as soon as possible once those details are confirmed.

Chris Larmer, Operations Director at SLC, said: "We have around 1.5 million students expected to start or return to education this autumn and my advice to students this week is not to wait for your exams results – submit an application as soon as possible as it can always be changed and updated online at a later date."

- **The easiest way to apply is online:**

Students in England can apply at:

<https://studentfinance.campaign.gov.uk/> Students in Wales can apply at:  
<https://www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/discover-student-finance>

- **For most students, it's straightforward to apply and should only take around 30 minutes.**

This year SLC has improved the service to make it easier to use, which means that the majority can complete their application digitally – submitting evidence, updating personal details and checking on next steps via their online accounts. If they need any help, there is plenty

of information available online. Students in England can apply at: <https://studentfinance.campaign.gov.uk/> Students in Wales can apply at: <https://www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/discover-student-finance>

- **Once submitted, applications take up to six to eight weeks to process and we will get in touch if we need more information.**

Students can use the application tracker in their online account to view their application's status, at a time that is convenient for them– so they don't have to worry or get in touch with us for an update on progress. Read more about the process:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-get-your-first-payment-if-youre-apply-ing-late>

- **You won't need to do anything unless your university, college or course details change.**

If you accept a place at university or college through Clearing, you'll need to [sign in to your student finance account](#) and let us know of any changes. You must do this even if your UCAS application has changed – your student finance application is not linked to UCAS. You'll need to change the university or college on the application as well as your course. You should also tell us the correct tuition fee being charged for your new course.

- **If your exam results are different from what you expected and your course choice is different from when you initially applied for your student finance, make sure that you update your course and university details in your online account right away.**
- **To help students in England who are applying for student finance during Clearing.**

SLC has a [guide](#) containing useful information including steps they can take to ensure their application can be processed quickly.

Chris added: "Last year, we paid out £22bn in Tuition Fees and Maintenance Loans and this year we are expecting similar numbers. Our absolute priority is to ensure that we have as many student finance applications as possible processed and ready to pay at the start of term, including those that applied during Clearing. Our team is ready for a busy few weeks ahead and we wish students all the best on Thursday."

SLC opened its application window in February this year and students were encouraged to apply before the deadline (20 May 2022 for new students and 24 June 2022 for returning students) to ensure they had their finance in place

for the start of term. Students whose applications are currently being processed but whose course, university or college haven't changed after results day, do not need to take any action unless they are asked to [provide evidence](#). In that situation, SLC will be in touch. Students can keep track of their application status via the online tracker.

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## [MMO response to Greenpeace action in South West Deeps \(East\)](#)

News story

MMO and Greenpeace have a shared interest in protecting our precious marine environment.



Greenpeace is aware that the MMO is delivering accelerated plans to introduce appropriate management protection measures within England's offshore Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) following new powers contained in the Fisheries Act 2020.

In June this year, [the use of bottom towed gear was prohibited in four MPAs](#) which protects a total area of over 13,000 km<sup>2</sup>. These first four MPAs were selected as a priority to preserve their vibrant and productive undersea ecosystems that provide an important food source for species such as kittiwakes, puffins and porpoises.

The MMO has since completed a call for evidence for a further 13 MPAs (from 14 May to 10 July 2022), to seek views on our draft assessment of the impacts of fishing activity on the designated features of this further set of MPAs.

With plans in place to then move onto actions to consider the remaining MPAs to follow.



As part of our ongoing engagement, MMO had already met with Greenpeace and also invited Greenpeace to a stakeholder workshop this month with other environmental non-government organisations to discuss our offshore MPA work.

As such, we are surprised and disappointed by the announcement made by Greenpeace of their intention to undertake further unlawful activity within this specific MPA at South West Deeps (East).

In a [previous action against Greenpeace](#), the court's comments expected that Greenpeace will respect and comply with the marine licensing regime in line with all other marine users and stakeholders, and it was made clear that the MMO has jurisdiction to prosecute unlicensed and unlawful activity in the UK marine area.

The MMO remains open to engagement with Greenpeace to ensure we can achieve our joint goal of managed and protected seas. However, should unlicensed activity be undertaken, the MMO will, as England's Marine regulator, discharge our regulatory functions in line with our compliance and enforcement strategy.

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## [First bivalent COVID-19 booster vaccine approved by UK medicines regulator](#)

An updated version of the COVID-19 vaccine made by Moderna that targets two coronavirus variants (known as a "bivalent" vaccine) has today been approved for adult booster doses by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) after it was found to meet the UK regulator's standards of safety, quality and effectiveness.

The decision to grant approval for this booster vaccine in the UK was endorsed by the government's independent expert scientific advisory body, the Commission on Human Medicines, after carefully reviewing the evidence.

In each dose of the booster vaccine, 'Spikevax bivalent Original/Omicron', half of the vaccine (25 micrograms) targets the original virus strain from 2020 and the other half (25 micrograms) targets Omicron.

The MHRA's decision is based on data from a clinical trial which showed that a booster with the bivalent Moderna vaccine triggers a strong immune response against both Omicron (BA.1) and the original 2020 strain. In an exploratory analysis the bivalent vaccine was also found to generate a good

immune response against the Omicron sub-variants BA.4 and BA.5.

Safety monitoring showed that the side effects observed were the same as those seen for the original Moderna booster dose and were typically mild and self-resolving, and no serious safety concerns were identified.

**Dr June Raine, MHRA Chief Executive said:**

“I am pleased to announce the approval of the Moderna bivalent booster vaccine, which was found in the clinical trial to provide a strong immune response against the Omicron BA.1 variant as well as the original 2020 strain.

“The first generation of COVID-19 vaccines being used in the UK continue to provide important protection against the disease and save lives. What this bivalent vaccine gives us is a sharpened tool in our armoury to help protect us against this disease as the virus continues to evolve.

“We have in place a comprehensive safety surveillance strategy for monitoring the safety of all UK-approved COVID-19 vaccines and this will include the vaccine approved today.”

**Professor Sir Munir Pirmohamed, Chair of the Commission on Human Medicines said:**

“The Commission on Human Medicines and its COVID-19 Vaccines Expert Working Group has independently reviewed the data on safety, quality and effectiveness and agrees with the MHRA’s decision.”

“The virus, SARS-CoV-2, is continually evolving in order to evade the immunity provided by vaccines. This novel bivalent vaccine represents the next step in the development of vaccines to combat the virus, with its ability to lead to a broader immune response than the original vaccine.”

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) will advise on how this vaccine should be offered as part of the deployment programme.

**Notes to editors**

- The [Commission on Human Medicines \(CHM\)](#) advises ministers on the safety, efficacy and quality of medicinal products. The CHM is an advisory non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Department of Health and Social Care.
- The MHRA’s Conditional Marketing Authorisation for the Moderna bivalent booster vaccine is valid in Great Britain only. An emergency use authorisation has been granted for Northern Ireland to ensure access across the whole of the United Kingdom. Both authorisations were made on the basis of the same rigorous evaluation of data.
- More information can be found in the [product information](#)
- A recent paper in a [Lancet journal](#) suggested that COVID-19 vaccines have prevented up to 20 million deaths in the first year of use