

The most vulnerable and health and care workers offered COVID-19 jab as government hits target to protect those most at risk

- The most vulnerable and those who care for them have been offered a COVID-19 vaccine as government target met on Sunday
- People in this group account for 88% of COVID-19 deaths
- Over a quarter of UK adult population have been vaccinated with first dose

As of Sunday 14 February, all care home residents and staff, health and social care workers, people aged 70 and over, and the clinically extremely vulnerable have been offered a vaccine. These groups account for 88% of deaths from COVID-19, meaning potentially tens of thousands of lives will be saved.

The health service across the UK has been working tirelessly to vaccinate those most at risk as quickly as possible after the government secured effective vaccines early and they passed stringent safety tests at the end of last year.

Since then the UK vaccination programme has accelerated with nearly 1,000 vaccines being administered a minute at one point and a record 598,389 first doses delivered in one day on 31 January.

More than 15.3 million people in the UK – more than a quarter of all adults – have now been vaccinated with their first dose.

The NHS is working hard to encourage the remaining people who have been offered a vaccine to come forward.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

I'm so proud of the team – we've hit this fantastic milestone in our battle against COVID-19. In less than 10 weeks we've jabbed over 15 million people across the UK.

That's one in every 4 adults now starting to receive protection from this dreadful disease.

This accomplishment is thanks to the incredible efforts of frontline NHS workers, vaccine volunteers, the armed forces and all those working in local and central government. The vaccine rollout shows what our country can achieve working together.

There is so much more to do and I urge anyone eligible to step

forward and take up their appointment. The vaccine is our route to freedom – we will beat this virus jab by jab.

As the milestone has been hit, from today NHS England has started offering vaccines to people in the next 2 priority groups as recommended by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) – those aged 65 and over and people with underlying health conditions which mean they are clinically vulnerable to COVID-19

The government aims to offer a vaccine to all priority cohorts 1 to 9 by May and all adults by September.

As large numbers of people from at risk groups are vaccinated, we will be able to gather the evidence to prove the impact on infection rates, hospitalisation and reduced deaths. If successful, this should in time lead to a reassessment of current restrictions.

Until then it is essential that everyone continues to stay at home if possible whether they have had the vaccine or not. It's as important as ever to stay at home to protect the NHS and save lives.

Vaccine Minister Nadhim Zahawi said:

The NHS has pulled out all the stops to vaccinate the most vulnerable people in every corner of the UK, saving lives and reducing pressure on the NHS.

I want to thank everybody involved in this mammoth operation which is the largest vaccination programme in our history.

The NHS will now focus on vaccinating people who have not yet come forward and people in cohorts 5 and 6. Everybody will get their second dose within 12 weeks and we're confident we can offer vaccines to all those in cohorts 1 to 9 by May.

The government is following the advice of independent experts at the JCVI on which groups of people to prioritise for COVID-19 vaccines. The JCVI advised the priority should be to prevent deaths and protect health and care staff.

The vaccination programme continues to rapidly expand, with thousands of vaccination centres across the country providing people with easy access to a vaccine, regardless of where they live.

NHS Chief Executive Sir Simon Stevens said:

The speed and precision of this programme – focusing first on protecting people at highest risk – is testimony to the skill and dedication of NHS GPs, nurses, pharmacists, and many thousands of others who have all come together to make such a shared success of

this well designed and brilliantly organised NHS vaccination campaign.

Delivering this major national milestone in just 10 weeks would be extraordinary at any time, but doing it in the teeth of the winter COVID surge – which has seen our hospitals looking after more than 100,000 severely ill coronavirus patients in just the last month alone – is a remarkable achievement.

The guidance from the government and the NHS to local vaccination services remains that they should still offer the vaccine to each of the priority groups in the order set out by the JCVI.

A total number of 15,300,151 people have received the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine in the UK. 539,630 people have received their second jab.

The [full list of priority groups](#) is as follows:

1. residents in a care home for older adults and their carers
2. all those 80 years of age and over and frontline health and social care workers
3. all those 75 years of age and over
4. all those 70 years of age and over and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals
5. all those 65 years of age and over
6. all individuals aged 16 years to 64 years with underlying health conditions which put them at higher risk of serious disease and mortality
7. all those 60 years of age and over
8. all those 55 years of age and over
9. all those 50 years of age and over

Through the government's Vaccines Taskforce, the UK has secured access to 407 million doses of 7 of the most promising vaccine candidates, including:

- BioNTech/Pfizer for 40 million doses
- Oxford/AstraZeneca for 100 million doses
- Moderna for 17 million doses
- GlaxoSmithKline and Sanofi Pasteur for 60 million doses
- Novavax for 60 million doses
- Janssen for 30 million doses
- Valneva for 100 million doses

To date, the government has invested over £300 million into manufacturing a successful vaccine to enable a rapid roll out.

The UK government is committed to supporting equitable access to vaccines worldwide. The UK is the largest donor to the COVAX facility, the global mechanism to help developing countries access a coronavirus vaccine, and has committed £548 million in UK aid to help distribute 1.3 billion doses of coronavirus vaccines to 92 developing countries this year.