

UK health ministers' statement on JCVI advice (13 April 2021)

The independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has today published its [final advice for phase 2 of the COVID-19 vaccination programme](#), setting out that the most effective way to minimise hospitalisations and deaths is to continue to prioritise people by age.

In line with its interim advice, the JCVI has recommended an age-based approach with adults aged 18 to 49 prioritised in descending age order as follows:

- all those aged 40 to 49 years
- all those aged 30 to 39 years
- all those aged 18 to 29 years

In addition, data indicates that in individuals aged 18 to 49 years there is an increased risk of hospitalisation in males, those who are in certain black, Asian or ethnic minority (BAME) communities, those with a BMI of 30 or more (obese/morbidly obese), and those experiencing socio-economic deprivation. JCVI strongly advises that individuals in these groups promptly take up the offer of vaccination when they are offered, and that deployment teams should utilise the experience and understanding of local health systems and demographics, combined with clear communications and outreach activity to promote vaccination in these groups.

Individuals who are at increased risk of severe outcomes from COVID-19 are likely to be vaccinated most rapidly by an operationally simple vaccine strategy. JCVI will continue close monitoring of the programme in terms of safety, effectiveness and uptake, and will update its advice as required.

All 4 nations of the UK have agreed to follow the JCVI's recommended approach, with the understanding that age is assessed to be the strongest factor linked to mortality, morbidity and hospitalisations, and because speed of delivery is crucial as we provide more people with protection from COVID-19 across the UK.

The UK remains on course to meet the target to offer a vaccine to all those in the phase 1 priority groups by mid-April, and all adults by the end of July.

The UK-wide agreement to follow the prioritisation advice of the JCVI for phase 1 of the vaccine deployment has allowed a consistent rollout of vaccines across the UK, and seamless coordination between England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Signed:

Matt Hancock, Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care

Robin Swann, Minister of Health, Northern Ireland Executive

Vaughan Gething, Minister for Health and Social Services, Welsh Government

Jeane Freeman, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport, Scottish Government