

# Minister for Africa statement on the Somali electoral process

Press release

UK Minister for Africa, Vicky Ford has called on Somali leaders to conclude the electoral process in a manner that the Somali people can have confidence in.



Minister for Africa, Vicky Ford said:

The UK is deeply concerned by the political situation in Somalia. Somalia stands at a critical juncture. For the sake of Somalia's stability and security, it is vital Somalia's leaders conclude the electoral process as soon as possible in a way that ensures the confidence of the Somali people in its outcome.

We underline the importance of an urgent meeting of the National Consultative Council (NCC) as the appropriate forum in which to resolve fundamental issues, address observed electoral shortcomings and accelerate the process. Greater transparency in the process will be particularly important. We reiterate that the NCC is established as the forum through which grievances with the process are addressed. At the technical level it is essential that the independence of the authority of the Electoral Bodies is respected.

We urge all Somalia's leaders to attend the NCC meeting and to engage constructively in these talks. We remain supportive of any process that respects the 17 September 2020 and 27 May 2021 agreements and leads to consensus on a way forward.

This is a time for leadership and cooperation by all parties. It is vital Somalia's leaders look beyond self-interest and refrain from any actions that could exacerbate the political tensions and risk violence, including through public statements, parallel processes or other provocative measures.

As we stated earlier this year, in the absence of consensus leading to inclusive and credible elections being held without further delay, the international community's relationship with Somalia's leadership will change. The UK will work with its international partners on a common approach to re-evaluate our relationship and the nature of our assistance to Somalia.

Published 26 December 2021

---

## [Uptake of COVID-19 vaccine doses soars in week before Christmas](#)

- Public reminded the offer of a vaccine will always be available and urged to come forward to protect themselves and their loved ones
- Largest increase among people aged under 30 in England
- All eligible reminded to Get Boosted Now to protect against Omicron

Thousands more first and second doses were administered last week compared with the week before, as the public are today reminded that the offer of a vaccine is still available and encouraged to come forward to protect themselves against Omicron.

221,564 first doses were administered in the week of 15 to 21 December in England, a 46% increase from the previous week and 279,112 second doses were administered, a 39% jump.

In England, there was an 85% increase in first doses in people aged 18 and 24 and a 71% increase in first doses among people aged 25 to 30. The 7 days up to 21 December saw more over 60s have a first dose than any 7-day period since early June.

While 2 doses of a COVID-19 vaccine provides strong protection against the Delta variant, data from the UK Health Security Agency shows vaccine effectiveness against symptomatic infection is substantially reduced against Omicron with just 2 doses over time – but a third dose provides between 60% and 70% protection against symptomatic infection from Omicron 2 to 4 weeks after the booster is given.

The government and NHS England has rapidly expanded the booster programme and launched an advertising blitz encouraging people to Get Boosted Now. More than 30 million people have already had their top-up jab and all eligible adults will be offered a boosted vaccine by the end of the year. It is vital to get a first and second jab, in order to be eligible for a booster to get the vital protection against Omicron.

Many venues and events in England now require people to have 2 COVID-19 vaccines or proof of a negative test as a condition of entry. People can access their NHS COVID Pass digitally or receive a paper copy once they have been doubled jabbed.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

It has never been more vital to get your jabs and the NHS will always be there for those coming forward to protect themselves and their family. It has been excellent to see a recent surge in first and second jabs.

Those initial jabs lay the foundation for the booster jab to protect against Omicron – 2 doses is not enough and you need to build protection jab by jab and once eligible Get Boosted Now.

Millions of people have rolled up their sleeves, so let's build on that momentum and ensure we have the protection we need this winter.

Appointments continue to be available over the festive period. A total of 750 armed forces personnel have been drafted in to support the deployment of booster vaccines across the UK and extra vaccine centres and pop-up sites have opened to make it as easy as possible for people to get vaccinated.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities this week announced it will be giving £22.5 million to councils to encourage people to come forward and get vaccinated, whether it is their first, second or third dose. The Community Vaccines Champion scheme will target 60 local authorities with the lowest vaccine uptake.

It will be used to run events in communities across the country to make sure everyone has access to the most accurate and up-to-date health advice, and fund pop-up vaccination centres in places of worship.

Vaccines Minister Maggie Throup said:

Following the emergence of the new Omicron variant, the booster programme has been turbocharged with more vaccine sites popping up making it easier than ever for people to get their jab, whether that's the first, second or booster.

It is heart-warming to see the numbers of people rolling up their sleeves to get their initial doses of a lifesaving COVID-19 vaccine.

But 2 doses are not enough against Omicron. I urge everyone eligible to take advantage of our accelerated programme and get their booster booked in as soon as possible, to top up your protection for the New Year.

□More pop-up sites will be coming online with local areas looking at the most convenient sites for their communities – from trucks and buses in parks to cathedrals, football stadiums and leisure centres.

There are now around 3,000 sites across the country, which includes double the number of hospitals offering jabs to the public – going from 30 to 71 in 2 weeks.

Dr Nikki Kanani, deputy lead for the NHS Covid vaccination programme, said:

It is so encouraging to see that alongside the incredible booster uptake we've seen in the last couple of weeks, and throughout Christmas, every day people are continuing to come forward for their first and second doses – allowing them to also get their booster as soon as possible.

With lots of appointments available to book online and pop-up clinics and walk-ins right across the country, it is never too late to get your first COVID-19 vaccine and the offer from the NHS is evergreen.

Rough sleepers are being helped to get their COVID-19 vaccines and move into safe accommodation over the winter thanks to a £28 million government funding boost, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities announced earlier this week (20 December 2021).

The Protect and Vaccinate scheme will help to increase vaccine uptake among people who are homeless and sleeping rough, supporting those who are hesitant about getting their vital booster jabs and funding emergency accommodation to get people off the streets.

This means delivering mobile vaccinations where people are sleeping on the streets, supporting outreach work in shelters to educate people about the dangers of the virus, and giving money to councils to provide safe and secure accommodation while their level of vaccination is increased.

---

**[Get Boosted Now text message to go out from Boxing Day](#)**



- Every adult needs a COVID-19 booster vaccine to protect against Omicron
- In partnership with UK phone networks, the UK Government will send out SMS texts on Boxing Day urging people to get a booster
- The SMS texts are part of the Get Boosted Now campaign and the latest push in a record-breaking week for daily vaccinations

From Boxing Day (26 December) people in the UK will receive a text message reminding them to get a booster vaccine to protect us all from the spread of the Omicron.

More than 32 million people – over 60% of adults in the UK – have now had their COVID-19 booster.

The expansion of the booster programme continues at a rapid pace, with all adults able to get their life-saving jab by booking online through the [National Booking Service](#) or by visiting their nearest walk-in vaccination centre.

This week, more vaccination sites have opened across the country, making it as easy as possible to Get Boosted Now, including football stadiums and shopping centres.

While two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine provides strong protection against the Delta variant, data from the UK Health Security Agency shows vaccine effectiveness against symptomatic infection is substantially reduced against Omicron with just two doses over time – but a third dose provides between 60% and 70% protection against symptomatic infection from Omicron two to four weeks after the booster is given.

It is vital to get a first and second jab, in order to be eligible for a booster to get the vital protection against Omicron.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

We are texting this Boxing Day for all eligible adults to Get Boosted Now.

It has never been as important to get protected with the booster – so whether it is in between turkey sandwiches or before the Boxing Day fixtures, whatever your traditions make the booster a part of them this year.

Millions of vaccine slots are available through the festive calendar so if you're not boosted and you get this text, take up the offer and get vaccinated.

Some venues and events in England now require people to have two COVID-19 vaccines or proof of a negative test as a condition of entry. People can access their NHS COVID Pass digitally or receive a paper copy once they have been doubled jabbed.

HMG would like to thank the Mobile Network Operators for their assistance in helping deliver the vitally important Get Boosted Now message.

Published 26 December 2021

Last updated 26 December 2021 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 26 December 2021

Almost 3.2 mil changed to more than

2. 26 December 2021

First published.

---

## [Get Boosted Now text message to go out from Boxing Day](#)

Press release

As part of the national Get Boosted Now campaign to protect against Omicron, a text will be sent out from Boxing Day reminding people to get jabbed



- Every adult needs a COVID-19 booster vaccine to protect against Omicron
- In partnership with UK phone networks, the UK Government will send out SMS texts on Boxing Day urging people to get a booster

- The SMS texts are part of the Get Boosted Now campaign and the latest push in a record-breaking week for daily vaccinations

From Boxing Day (26 December) people in the UK will receive a text message reminding them to get a booster vaccine to protect us all from the spread of the Omicron.

Almost 32 million people – over 60% of adults in the UK – have now had their COVID-19 booster.

The expansion of the booster programme continues at a rapid pace, with all adults able to get their life-saving jab by booking online through the [National Booking Service](#) or by visiting their nearest walk-in vaccination centre.

This week, more vaccination sites have opened across the country, making it as easy as possible to Get Boosted Now, including football stadiums and shopping centres.

While two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine provides strong protection against the Delta variant, data from the UK Health Security Agency shows vaccine effectiveness against symptomatic infection is substantially reduced against Omicron with just two doses over time – but a third dose provides between 60% and 70% protection against symptomatic infection from Omicron two to four weeks after the booster is given.

It is vital to get a first and second jab, in order to be eligible for a booster to get the vital protection against Omicron.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

We are texting this Boxing Day for all eligible adults to Get Boosted Now.

It has never been as important to get protected with the booster – so whether it is in between turkey sandwiches or before the Boxing Day fixtures, whatever your traditions make the booster a part of them this year.

Millions of vaccine slots are available through the festive calendar so if you're not boosted and you get this text, take up the offer and get vaccinated.

Some venues and events in England now require people to have two COVID-19 vaccines or proof of a negative test as a condition of entry. People can access their NHS COVID Pass digitally or receive a paper copy once they have been doubled jabbed.

HMG would like to thank the Mobile Network Operators for their assistance in helping deliver the vitally important Get Boosted Now message.

## Public urged to protect themselves from online sales scams

The public must be vigilant in protecting themselves from the threat of online scammers during the Boxing Day sales, the Government has urged today (26 December) after a year which saw a record number of cyber attacks and online scams.

Reports to Action Fraud, the national reporting centre for fraud and cyber crime, reveal that almost 100,000 people in the UK have fallen victim to online shopping fraud in the past 13 months – with over £60 million being reported lost, leading to this call to action for the public to take five simple steps to protect themselves and their families from fraudsters.

Traditionally, Boxing Day marks one of the busiest days on the high street for retailers, however in recent years more people have been shopping online – with Barclaycard estimating £2.7 billion was spent online by UK shoppers on Boxing Day 2020, an average of £162 per shopper.

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) is encouraging people to shop online securely by following five actionable steps:

1. Keeping accounts secure – strong and separate passwords should be used for the most important online accounts, including email, banking or payment accounts (such as PayPal). The NCSC recommends using three random words to create a password. Turning on two-step verification can add an extra layer of protection.
2. Be aware of emails, text messages or websites that look too good to be true or suspicious – many scammers set up fake messages designed to steal financial and personal information. Members of the public can report suspicious messages to the NCSC via text to 7726 and email to [report@phishing.gov.uk](mailto:report@phishing.gov.uk).
3. Choose online retailers carefully – research stores before buying to confirm they are legitimate through trustworthy consumer websites. Some emails or texts about amazing offers may contain links to fake websites. If unsure, don't use the link.
4. Use a credit card for online payments if possible – most major credit card providers protect online purchases, and are obliged to refund individuals in certain circumstances.
5. Only provide enough details to complete a purchase – only fill in the mandatory details on a website when shopping online (often marked with an asterisk).

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for Cyber Crime Steve



Barclay said:

With a record number of cyber attacks this year, it is crucial we all take some steps to keep ourselves and our families safe from scammers while shopping online, particularly in the Boxing Day sales which have become a firm favourite for fraudsters.

In the past year, government and police action has seen numerous convictions on cyber fraud, and we should all play our part to stamp out this terrible crime that can ruin lives.

Paul Maddinson, Director of National Resilience and Strategy at the NCSC said:

Scammers will use any opportunity to try and trick the public and businesses into parting with their money so it's really important that we all know how to protect ourselves.

Whilst scams can be convincing, there are practical steps you can take to avoid falling victim to cyber crime which can all be found on the NCSC's website.

This warning against online scams comes alongside growing concern about the vulnerability of people's personal technology. Hackers are targeting individuals' applications and email accounts, gaining access to personal and financial information and exposing individuals to considerable risk.

As people receive new laptops and smartphones over Christmas, the risks are magnified. The government is also encouraging individuals to ensure that any new devices are protected to keep personal and financial information secure from hackers. However, these dangers are easily avoidable by adopting two key Cyber Aware behaviours:

- Turning on two-step verification
- Using three random words to secure your email accounts

For further guidance on how to stay secure online, visit [www.cyberaware.gov.uk](http://www.cyberaware.gov.uk)