

# UK provides a new home for vulnerable Afghan female judges

Under Taliban rule female judges and others who have stood up for women's rights have been persecuted and forced into hiding, at risk of reprisals from criminals they tried and sentenced and who have now been released from prison.

The group of three female judges and one male prosecutor, and their families arrived in the UK on Friday. They were granted permission to come to the UK by the Home Secretary during the evacuation and had support from the International Bar Association and the International Association of Women Judges. UK judges will work with the group to ensure they can use their legal skills to rebuild their careers in the UK.

In the past 20 years, approximately 270 women have sat as judges in Afghanistan. They have become prominent public figures – working to uphold the country's laws, judging cases of violence against women and girls and advocating for women's rights.

Since the end of Operation Pitting in late August, the UK has helped more than 1,800 people, including British and Afghan nationals, to leave Afghanistan.

Foreign Secretary, and Minister for Women and Equalities, Liz Truss said:

These brave people have been defending rights and freedoms of women in Afghanistan. The UK is a fierce champion of freedom and the rule of law, and ending violence suffered by women around the world is a personal priority for me. We will continue to do all we can to help at-risk Afghans leave the country.

Baroness Helena Kennedy QC, International Bar Association, said:

We are extremely happy that the brave Afghan women judges and lawyers have now arrived in the UK where they will be provided with assistance by the UK Government. These women fought for human rights of all in Afghanistan and this work turned them into targets. Now they need our assistance. We hope that the families will be welcomed by their newly found local communities and will embrace their new lives – away from the threats that forced them to leave their lives behind and seek refuge away from home.

The women arriving in the UK previously took part in a scheme organised by the UK Association of Women Judges and supported by the British Embassy in Kabul to provide Afghan judges with professional partnerships in the UK. This

scheme started in early 2021. The UK judges are now working to ensure that those arriving have access to professional opportunities, scholarships and work placements so that they can use their skills to rebuild their careers and to contribute to the UK.

[ENDS]

---

## [UK hits 12 million top-ups in record breaking week](#)

- In just seven days – more than 2.4 million booster jobs have been given across the UK – the best week in the programme so far
- More milestones hit as 80% of over 12s now had two doses

More than two million boosters have been given to people across the UK in the last week, as the vaccination programme continues to accelerate.

In a record-breaking week, the UK has topped 12 million booster and third jobs given in total across the UK – with hundreds of thousands of people coming forward every day to get the vital protection offered by top-up jobs ahead of the colder months.

A total of 12,164,586 booster jobs have now been given, with 340,943 recorded yesterday in the UK.

According to the latest stats, in the 7 days leading up to November 11, almost 2.5 million new boosters or third doses have been reported in the UK, which is the highest weekly increase so far.

The latest figures come in a week of major milestones, with England reporting a total of 90 million first, second and third doses being administered on Thursday, and 80% of over 12s now having had two doses.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

Another excellent week of significant milestones for our vaccination programme as 12 million people have now played their part by coming forward for a top-up jab to give not only themselves, but their loved ones vital protection this winter.

We've made it easier than ever to get your booster this week by opening up appointments so people can pre-book a month in advance and I continue to urge all those eligible to get your jab as soon as possible.

For everyone who has not yet come forward for a first dose, second

dose or booster – this is a national mission and it is not too late. Every jab builds our wall of defence across the country ahead of Christmas.

Following an update to the National Booking Service earlier this week, booking a booster jab has never been easier. Those eligible for a top-up vaccine – people over 50 and those most at risk of COVID-19 – can pre-book their jab five months after their second dose, making it easier and more convenient to boost their protection into winter.

People will still receive their vaccine six months after their second dose, but the change will speed up the vaccination programme by allowing people to receive a jab the day they become eligible, rather than waiting for a convenient appointment.

Vaccines give high levels of protection but immunity reduces over time, particularly for older adults and at-risk groups, so it is vital that vulnerable people come forward to get their COVID-19 booster vaccine to top-up their defences and protect themselves this winter.

The latest evidence from SAGE shows that protection against symptomatic disease falls from 65%, up to three months after the second dose, to 45% six months after the second dose for the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine, and from 90% to 65% for the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine. Protection against hospitalisation falls from 95% to 75% for Oxford/AstraZeneca and 99% to 90% for Pfizer/BioNTech.

Although the vaccine effectiveness against severe disease remains high, a small change can generate a major shift in hospital admissions. For example, a change from 95% to 90% protection against hospitalisation would lead to doubling of admissions in those vaccinated.

The booster programme is designed to top up this waning immunity. Early results from Pfizer show that a booster following a primary schedule of the same vaccine restores protection back up to 95.6% against symptomatic infection.

Vaccines Minister Maggie Throup said:

It is wonderful to see the momentum of the phenomenal vaccine programme which is saving lives and reducing pressure on the NHS.

Getting your jab ahead of the winter months could be the most important thing you do as we all look forward to spending more time with our families and friends at Christmas.

I urge all those eligible to come forward to give yourself the vital protection of the life-saving vaccines.

COVID-19 booster vaccines have been delivered or booked in at every older

adult care home in England where safe to do so, with almost nine in 10 care homes already visited.

People are also able to book by calling 119 and can get vaccinated at hundreds of walk-in sites across the country without an appointment. Those eligible can use the NHS online walk-in finder to locate the most convenient site.

Dr Emily Lawson, head of the NHS Vaccination Programme, said:

It is fantastic to see we have hit the 12 million mark for the number of booster jabs delivered in the UK, including more than 10 million administered by the NHS across England in under two months and this couldn't have been done without the hard work of NHS staff and volunteers up and down the country.

As booster bookings continue to boom and with hundreds of thousands of people getting their vital top-up doses every single day, I would urge the millions being invited for their booster in the coming weeks to book in as soon as possible – it will provide you and your loved ones vital protection throughout the winter.

Last month, clinical guidance was updated to enable boosters to be given slightly earlier to those at highest risk, where this makes operational sense to do so. This includes care home residents who may have received their second doses at different times to be vaccinated in the same session, as long as it has been five months since their second dose. It may also help with other vulnerable groups, such as housebound patients, so that they can have their flu and COVID-19 vaccines at the same time.

Vaccine confidence is high with data from the Office for National Statistics showing nearly all (94%) of those aged 50 to 69 say they would be likely to get their COVID-19 booster if offered, with the figure rising to 98% for those over 70.

Flu is another winter virus that can be serious. To give people the best protection over winter, those eligible for a free flu vaccine should come forward and book an appointment at either their GP practice or their local pharmacy, or take it up when offered by their employer or other healthcare provider.

The government has launched a nationwide advertising campaign, encouraging people eligible to get their booster and flu jabs to protect themselves and their loved ones and help reduce pressures on the NHS. This includes outdoor billboards, broadcast and community radio and TV.

The offer of a first and second COVID-19 vaccine remains open to anyone who is eligible. Vaccines are available free of charge and from thousands of vaccine centres, GP practices and pharmacies. Around 98% of people live within 10 miles of a vaccination centre in England and vaccinations are taking place at sites including mosques, community centres and football

stadiums.

There are more than 500 extra vaccination sites now compared to April this year, with 1,697 vaccination centres in operation in April 2021, and over 2,200 vaccination centres in operation now.

Vaccines are also available for those aged 12-15 to offer the best possible protection this winter in schools, as well as more than 200 vaccine centres.

---

## [240 extra HGV driver training places in boost for veterans](#)

Under the Career Transition Partnership (CTP) – the MOD’s official scheme for those transitioning from the military into civilian life – the current provision of 100 training places will increase to nearly 350 places over the next 12 months.

Courses are available in Cat C, Cat C&E, Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (DCPC) and ADR (dangerous goods), opening up a range of employment opportunities to service leavers.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Leo Docherty said:

This fantastic initiative will provide service leavers and veterans with valuable skills and opportunities to help them find employment as they leave the military, while aiding a cross-government effort to increase the number of HGV trained drivers.

Military service gives you skills for life.

This crucial support to those who have served in our nation’s military is our priority and I am delighted with the opportunity this expansion provides.

The expansion of the driver training offer will aid a cross-government effort to increase the number of HGV drivers, whilst also recognising the ask from service leavers and veterans for more funded vocational training. In addition, following agreement with the Department for Transport (DfT) and Department for Education (DfE), veterans who already hold an HGV licence, but have not undertaken the training to drive commercially, will be able to use DfE Skills Bootcamps to gain this qualification. The Defence School of Transport has been granted approval to train service leavers with the first of these courses having already begun and 120 places made available throughout the year.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Steve Barclay said:

I'm delighted that veterans and service leavers will be able to benefit from additional HGV driver training courses, which will enable more deliveries.

This is part of our commitment to work across government to tackle the global pressures that have impacted our supply chains.

This government is determined to support veterans and service leavers into the workplace, and today's announcement builds on the range of measures we've put in place to equip them with the necessary skills and opportunities.

The new training places are made possible because an exemption has been applied to allow veterans and service leavers to use their Enhanced Learning Credits (ELC[1]) to train as HGV drivers.

ELCs can normally only be used for qualifications that are Level 3 or above, on the national Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF). However, this exemption qualifies HGV driver training, usually Level 2, for ELC funding. Although an extra 240 training places are being made available, there is the capacity to increase places depending on interest.

The additional HGV driver opportunities are part of a broader package which includes 55 vocational training courses, such as plumbing and project management, through the CTP, and thousands of courses on offer through the ELC scheme. This is part of the MOD's commitment to providing the necessary skills and experience to help service leavers and veterans succeed in civilian working life.

---

## [Rugby figures urge fans to get vaccinated and ventilate indoor spaces](#)

- New film to be shown at Twickenham stadium to 80,000 fans during England v Australia match today
- Eligible people urged to get booster jab as soon as possible to top up protection ahead of winter

Rugby figures are urging people to get vaccinated and take action, including ventilating indoors spaces, to cut COVID-19 transmission in a new film which will be shown to rugby fans at one of the most anticipated games of the Autumn Nations Series today (Saturday November 13).

The Rugby Football Union and English international rugby union referee Wayne

Barnes have come together to remind sport fans to get the vaccine and to let fresh air in when socialising indoors and watching the rugby games in the series throughout November.

In a film being shown to 80,000 fans at Twickenham Stadium for the men's England v Australia game, rugby fans are seen socialising at a pub as rugby pundits give 'real-time' commentary on their actions, specifically those that could spread COVID-19 in an indoor environment.

Refereeing the fans, Wayne Barnes whistle stops 'play' as a fan is pulled up for his 'infraction' as he attempts to close the window in the pub and then forgets to wear a mask in his taxi as he goes home.

The film informs viewers that opening a window when socialising indoors will help reduce the chances of catching COVID-19, as well reminding them of the importance of vaccination, testing regularly using lateral flow tests, and wearing a face covering in enclosed spaces.

This follows the launch of the government campaign to 'STOP COVID-19 HANGING AROUND', aimed at increasing understanding on how to reduce COVID-19 levels indoors by opening a window for just 10 minutes every hour when socialising with others.

Wayne Barnes, English international rugby union referee and barrister, said:

It's great to have been asked to support this campaign. COVID-19 had a big impact on rugby, both at a community and elite level and I know everyone really did miss coming together to watch and play. The RFU worked hard to get rugby back up and running in England, like the other home unions have done, and we want everyone to enjoy the game again safely.

We have all had to adapt but it's been great to see sports fans being able to socialise and watch games across the country together. We had the first capacity crowd back at Twickenham for 609 days to see England play Tonga last weekend and are expecting the same again for England v Australia on Saturday.

This couldn't have been done without the collective effort of everyone remembering the COVID-19 safety measures. As people continue to come together during the Autumn Nations Series I'd remind fans are as safe as they can possibly be and follow the guidance.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Sajid Javid said:

It is fantastic to have rugby fans coming together to enjoy the Autumn series – whether that's at Twickenham, the pub or watching at home.

Having rugby referee legend Wayne Barnes championing the vital importance of getting your vaccine and the simple safety measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 delivers a crucial message ahead of the winter months.

I urge everyone who is eligible to get their booster vaccine as soon as possible to maintain the protection the vaccines give us all as we spend more time indoors with our loved ones this winter.

The film will be released and played at the men's England v Australia game today and the England v South Africa game on 20th November.

Whilst the life-saving vaccines remain our best defence against COVID-19 – giving us over 90% protection against hospitalisation from the virus – people can still catch COVID-19 even if they have been double vaccinated.

With one in three people with COVID-19 showing no symptoms, it is easy to pass it onto others without knowing. With fewer restrictions in place this winter, the action of letting fresh air into indoor spaces is even more important for everyone to keep COVID-19 cases down.

Vaccines give high levels of protection but immunity reduces over time, particularly for older adults and at-risk groups, so it is vital that vulnerable people come forward to get their COVID-19 booster vaccine to top-up their defences and protect themselves this winter.

The latest evidence from SAGE shows that protection against symptomatic disease falls from 65%, up to three months after the second dose, to 45% six months after the second dose for the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine, and from 90% to 65% for the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine. Protection against hospitalisation falls from 95% to 75% for Oxford/AstraZeneca and 99% to 90% for Pfizer/BioNTech.

Although the vaccine effectiveness against severe disease remains high, a small change can generate a major shift in hospital admissions. For example, a change from 95% to 90% protection against hospitalisation would lead to doubling of admissions in those vaccinated.

The booster programme is designed to top up this waning immunity. Early results from Pfizer show that a booster following a primary schedule of the same vaccine restores protection back up to 95.6% against symptomatic infection.

The campaign comes research revealing that only around a third of people (29%) are currently ventilating their home when they have visitors over and only 3% of those surveyed continued to ventilate their homes for a period after their guests left.

As well as opening windows for a few minutes every hour to dilute virus particles, other simple actions the public can take to reduce the spread of COVID-19 include wearing a face covering over the mouth and nose in busy indoor spaces, such as public transport or shops. In addition, the government



advises everyone to get their booster vaccination when eligible and continue to get tested with a rapid lateral flow device, even if they don't feel ill, if they are planning to mix with others indoors, or visit someone vulnerable.

Testing is the quickest and easiest way to find out if someone has the virus, even if they show no symptoms.

Visit [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus) for more information.

### Notes to editors:

- Opinium online survey conducted across a representative sample of 3,000 people in England, 15th – 20th October 2021 over 18 years.
- Full video available to download here:

---

## [PM call with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau: 12 November 2021](#)

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada.



The Prime Minister spoke to Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada this evening.

They discussed progress in the ongoing COP26 negotiations in Glasgow and agreed that an ambitious outcome is in sight.

The Prime Minister welcomed Canada's support in securing bold action on

financing for adaptation and progress on the issue of loss and damage.

The leaders committed to work together to help resolve outstanding issues in the talks and reach an agreement at COP26 that works for all countries.

Published 12 November 2021