

Prime Minister to set out next steps in Covid response

- Government focus to remain on vaccines as the first line of defence over the autumn and winter months
- JCVI final 'booster' decision expected next week
- Measures from the Coronavirus Act expected to be repealed

The Prime Minister will next week set out the government's autumn and winter plan for managing Covid.

Vaccines will continue to be our first line of defence over the autumn and winter months supported by new treatments, testing, and a world leading variant surveillance system.

Due to the efforts and sacrifices of the public, our NHS, and the phenomenal success of the vaccine rollout, the vast majority of restrictions were lifted in England at Step 4 of the Roadmap on 19 July.

As of 9 September, nearly 90% of the UK population aged over 16 have received a first dose of the Covid vaccine, and over 80% have received both doses.

The latest data from Public Health England shows Covid vaccines are highly effective against hospitalisation from the Delta (B.1.617.2) variant, the dominant strain in the UK. Analysis shows the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is 96% effective and the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine is 92% effective against hospitalisation after two doses.

The winter months will bring renewed challenges. Covid will circulate alongside flu and other respiratory viruses and the threat of a new variant remains. It is difficult to predict with certainty how these will interact and what pressure they may place on the NHS.

The independent expert committee – the Joint Committee on Vaccinations and Immunisation (JCVI) – were asked to consider a Covid vaccine booster programme. Their interim advice suggested planning for booster vaccines to be rolled out to the most vulnerable from September 2021, to offer an increased level of protection over winter.

The government expects to receive confirmation next week from the JCVI on the details of a vaccination booster programme, with plans in place to begin this month. This will boost immunity over the winter months, protecting against serious disease and death and unsustainable pressure on the NHS.

The government confirmed last week that those who are immunocompromised will be offered a third primary dose. This is separate to the booster programme, as those who require a third primary dose had insufficient protection from two doses.

The Prime Minister is also expected to repeal powers in England that are no longer necessary from the Coronavirus Act, as part of the government's plan for managing Covid over the autumn and winter.

These include:

- Powers to close-down sectors of the economy, such as business premises, or apply restrictions to events and gatherings.
- Powers that disrupt education, enabling temporary closure or restricting access to schools, colleges, and childcare.
- Powers that extend time limits for urgent warrants. Powers to detain infectious people.

Vital powers from the Act will be retained that are critical to protect and support the public. This includes giving sick pay to those isolating from day one rather than day seven, directing schools to remain open if they close against government guidance, and helping the NHS to get the emergency resource it needs.

Legal requirements will remain for someone to isolate if they test positive, to protect the most vulnerable from infection and to control the spread of variants. The Coronavirus Act is separate from the Public Health Act.

The Prime Minister is expected to hold a press conference next week to set out the next steps in the pandemic response.

Prime Minister, Boris Johnson said:

Thanks to the efforts of the public, the NHS and our phenomenal vaccination programme, we reached Step 4 in our Roadmap and life has returned to a sense of normality.

These extraordinary times required necessary but intrusive measures. But I'm determined to get rid of any powers we no longer need because of our vaccine defences.

I will set out the next phase in our Covid response shortly.

[£400m investment for the Royal Air](#)

Force

The RAF will be boosted by an investment of almost £400 million to enhance the capabilities of two of its vital assets – the C-17 Globemaster aircraft and the CH-47 Chinook helicopter.

UK's C-17 fleet – which recently played a key role in the UK's evacuation from Afghanistan – will receive a £324 million investment. This will upgrade software and hardware to improve airlift capability as part of a contract with the US Air Force.

The UK's fleet of Mk5 and Mk6 Chinook helicopters will be enhanced with state-of-the-art defensive systems, as part of a £64 million contract with Boeing Defence UK (BDUK) which will make them harder for adversaries to detect.

Minister for Defence Procurement, Jeremy Quin said:

Whether evacuating people in Kabul, transporting people to hospital during Covid-19 or providing crucial logistics on the battlefield, the C-17 and Chinook provide an invaluable service to our Armed Forces across the globe.

This investment ensures our aircraft are equipped with cutting-edge technology to face a myriad of emerging threats from adversaries.

The investment builds on commitments outlined in the Defence Command Paper earlier this year, which confirms an operational obligation to both aircraft as part of the Integrated Force 2030 approach. This is further supported by the £24 billion increase in defence spending over the next four years, announced by the Prime Minister in November 2020.

Negotiated by Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S), the five-and-a-half-year C-17 contract will continue the highly-specialised support for the aircraft under the 'Virtual Fleet' concept, where all nine operating nations have access to a world-class support solution.

Upgrades will include enhancements to the 'Beyond Line of Sight' satellite-enabled communication equipment, a wider field of view via the 'Head-Up Display' in the cockpit to help increase pilot situational awareness and widening the scope of the current free-fall parachuting capability.

The five-year Chinook helicopter contract managed by DE&S will see the installation of state-of-the-art Infra-Red Suppression Systems (IRSS) across some of the fleet, offering better protection from threats posed by new missile systems using the heat (infra-red) signature of the aircraft to target. IRSS technology will counter with 'blinking plates' on the helicopters which mask the hot components and redirect airflow to cool the exhaust gases, making it more difficult to target.

Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Mike Wigston said:

I am delighted with the introduction of these state-of-the-art upgrades to the Chinook and C-17 Globemaster, as well as the significant benefits of nine allied nations working together on C-17 as a 'Virtual Fleet'.

These measures will ensure our Chinook and Globemaster squadrons can operate wherever and whenever needed across the globe.

The contracts will support around 200 jobs across the UK. Around 100 will be sustained at BDUK sites across the country as the Chinook upgrade is rolled-out, contributing to an estimated 450 people employed in Chinook support across the wider Defence supply chain.

Around 50 new jobs will also be created at RAF Brize Norton, taking the total to around 100 employed on-site to provide maintenance and logistics for the C-17 fleet. This new agreement announced today provides continued support to the C-17 under a 'Virtual Fleet' concept whereby the UK and eight other nations who operate the aircraft have access to cost-effective and efficient support, as well as additional spare equipment, parts and resources.

£24 million for cutting-edge science and fisheries

Fishing businesses across the UK will now have access to £24 million of investment to develop technology, trial new gear and support world-class research to improve the productivity and long-term sustainability of the industry.

This comes as the UK industry builds back from the pandemic and benefits from new post Brexit quota arrangements. The UK fleet now has seen significant increases in quota fish stocks such as mackerel and herring. In England, under 10 metre vessels received increased quotas in a range of stocks. This more than doubled the quota they received last year.

The funding released by the Government to support better science and innovation projects is the first part of £100 million UK Seafood Fund designed to level up coastal communities across the UK. It will ensure industry is able to process more fish landed in the UK, and create more job opportunities across the supply chain. It will also upskill the workforce and train new entrants, as well as investing in technology to put the UK at the cutting edge of new safe and sustainable fishing methods.

Environment Secretary, George Eustice, said:

Over the last nine months, we have taken some important steps in the right direction for our fishing industry.

We've taken our independent seat at the Regional Fisheries Management Organisations, we have agreed a quota exchange mechanism, and we have seen an uplift in quota for UK vessels.

Now, this major investment will benefit coastal communities up and down the UK. The first investment from our £100M Seafood Fund will boost science and innovation in the fishing industry and, coupled with our Fisheries Act, help us ensure that we have the most sustainable fleet in the world.

Northern Ireland Secretary, Brandon Lewis, said:

The launch of this fund is the first of several brilliant opportunities for the Northern Ireland fisheries industry and will help it to reap the rewards of modernisation.

The UK Seafood Fund will support the sector to advance its practices and to be more productive, resilient and sustainable as we build back better from the pandemic.

Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Steve Barclay, said:

We are committed to making all areas of our economy more sustainable and resilient, and this fund will help to achieve that in the fishing industry. This investment will support the fishing industry and level up coastal communities and create jobs as part of our Plan for Jobs, as well as encourage further innovation in science and technology.

Secretary of State for Wales, Simon Hart, said:

The UK government is committed to supporting the fishing industry in Wales and the £100M Seafood Fund will help ensure it continues to have a sustainable future, contributing to jobs and prosperity in our coastal communities.

UK Government Minister for Scotland David Duguid said:

I know from extensive engagement with the Scottish seafood industry that the £100m UK Seafood Fund has been eagerly anticipated and I

welcome the news that the substantial first tranche of funding will boost innovation and all-important sustainability.

The UK Government has been steadfast in support of an industry pivotal to the wellbeing of coastal communities and we are determined all sectors – catching and processing – should be able to maximise the opportunities now before us. I look forward to continuing to work closely with the Scottish seafood and aquaculture sectors to ensure this fresh funding drives the industry to new heights.

To support industry, a [Fisheries Industry Science Partnerships scheme](#) will launch today for initial engagement with industry before inviting bids for project funding. The scheme will fund the gathering of new data to sustainably manage the UK's fish stocks, research new types of fishing gear to boost sustainable fishing, increase confidence in fisheries science, and increase knowledge of the benefits and impacts of fish farming.

Dr Bryce Stewart, Fisheries Biologist and Senior Lecturer at the University of York, said:

I am particularly delighted to see the launch of this scheme for Fisheries Industry Science Partnerships. Our recent research shows that such collaborations are vital for increasing trust and developing more effective and efficient management measures. Ultimately this should lead to more productive fisheries and a healthier marine environment.

The £100 million fund has been divided into three pillars:

- The Science and Innovation pillar, launched today, will see the fishing and seafood industry supported to work jointly with scientists to research new types of more productive and sustainable fishing gear, gather new data to more sustainably manage the UK's fish stocks, and trial projects such as new biodegradable packaging for chilled fish and seafood to reduce single-use plastics. These advancements in science and research will boost efficiency and help to ensure the long term sustainability of the industry.
- An Infrastructure pillar, to be announced later in the Autumn, will invest in projects to strengthen the supply chain in the UK, allowing the industry to make the most of increases in quota secured through the Trade and Cooperation Agreement. Potential projects include funding for the modernisation of ports, logistic hubs, freezing facilities, improvements to processing plants and new fish markets.
- A further Skills and Training pillar will support career opportunities

and upskilling in the sector to ensure the industry has the right skills, capacity, and expertise. This will be a significant boost for training in the industry, which often has lacked formal routes for training and progression.

Further detail on how to bid for funding for both of these schemes will be announced in due course.

[Time is running out to agree a basis for elections in Libya](#)

I would like to thank Special Envoy Jan Kubiš, Ambassador Tirumurti and Asma Khalifa for briefing the Council today. I would like to make four points.

First, time is running out to agree a legal and constitutional basis for elections. We are at a critical point. There is a clear demand from the Libyan people to participate in elections and have their voices heard. It is essential that those in authority who represent them reach an agreement on holding elections and that they commit to accepting the results of those elections. We welcome efforts by the House of Representatives to find a solution to this issue and encourage further engagement to allow full agreement on, and preparation for, presidential and political elections on 24 December, as set out in the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum roadmap, endorsed by this Council in resolution 2570.

The steps needed have not changed since the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum roadmap was agreed. But the task has become increasingly urgent. The UK will not hesitate to act against those who deliberately attempt to undermine the Libyan political process.

Second, the UK remains committed to championing women's full, equal and meaningful participation in Libya. In that spirit, we welcome Asima Khalifa's important contribution today. As Asima said, women have been disproportionately affected by the conflict in Libya but the elections in December offer an opportunity for the full meaningful participation of women as voters, candidates and decision-makers in the political process.

Third, I'd like to welcome the opening of the coastal road last month and congratulate the 5+5 Joint Military Commission in securing this step toward building trust between east and west. But there is much more to be done. It is essential now, just over a month until the anniversary of the 23 October Ceasefire Agreement, that there is a move from words to action. All foreign forces and mercenaries must withdraw from Libya without delay. We look forward to the initial deployment of the UN ceasefire monitors in support of the Libyan Ceasefire Monitoring Mechanism in the coming weeks. The 5+5

Ceasefire Monitoring Mechanism supported by UNSMIL has the UK's full support in driving this process forward..

Finally, I'd also like to welcome the independent strategic review of UNSMIL and thank Mr Bathily and his team for all their work. The recommendations of the review must now be implemented so that UNSMIL is best placed to help facilitate the Libyan-led and owned political process and build on the gains achieved by Jan and his team.

Madam President,

Libya is at a critical point. The actions needed to build a stable, prosperous, and inclusive future for all Libyans are clear and urgent. The next major milestone is also clear presidential and parliamentary elections on the 24th of December. The UK looks forward to working with international partners led by UNSMIL to support Libya over the months ahead.

[PM meeting with Chilean President Sebastián Piñera: 10 September 2021](#)

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson met with Chilean President Sebastián Piñera at Downing Street today.



The Prime Minister met with Chilean President Sebastián Piñera at Downing Street today, ahead of the UK taking on the COP Presidency from Chile in November.

They agreed that urgent action is needed to deliver on the Paris Agreement and keep the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees alive.

The leaders committed to work closely together ahead of November's summit to drive forward international action on ending the use of coal and

transitioning to renewable energy, restoring nature, and delivering on the \$100bn climate finance pledge.

They also discussed our shared ambition to boost trade and investment between the UK and Chile, including through the UK joining the CPTPP trading partnership, and collaboration on building back better from the pandemic.

The Prime Minister looked forward to partnering with President Piñera ahead of COP26 and to welcoming him to Glasgow in November.

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