

# Almost a quarter of a million UK-donated COVID-19 vaccines arrive in Ghana

The vaccines were met at Kotoka International Airport by senior officials from the British High Commission to Ghana, including Chargé d'affaires, Dr Joseph Whittle and the UK Health Adviser to Ghana, Uzoamaka Gilpin. Honourable Deputy Minister Tina Mensah and representatives from Ghana's Ministry of Health also attended the arrival alongside UNICEF Representative in Ghana, Anne-Claire Dufay.

Today's shipment is part of a broader pledge made by the UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, at the G7 meeting in June. The UK will share 100 million jobs with the rest of the world, of which 80% will be through COVAX. The UK has already donated around 5 million vaccine doses to COVAX and 3 million of these doses will be sent to countries across Africa. Nigeria, The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Ethiopia are among the countries to already receive vaccines.

Speaking at Kotoka International Airport, the Chargé d'affaires for the British High Commission to Ghana Dr Joseph Whittle, said:

Today's shipment signals another step forward in Ghana's vaccine programme. It means 249,600 front-line health workers, vulnerable people most at risk from COVID-19 and those in need of their vital second jab have access to vaccinations and better protection against COVID-19 variants.

Our shared commitment to overcome COVID-19 has only strengthened the UK-Ghana partnership, and this is reflected by the fact that Ghana is one of the first countries in the world receiving UK-donated vaccines.

The UK has been at the forefront of the global response to COVID-19, including through investing £90 million to support the development of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine. More than half a billion doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine have been delivered at a non-profit price globally, with two-thirds going to lower and middle-income countries.

The UK kick-started efforts to establish COVAX in 2020, providing a total of £548 million to fund vaccines for lower income countries. The scheme has delivered more than 152 million vaccine doses to over 137 countries and territories, including in 83 lower-middle income countries. 65% of the initial vaccine doses have been Oxford-AstraZeneca. COVAX aims to deliver 1.8 billion vaccines to lower-income countries around the world by early 2022.

UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab, said:

Three million doses of UK-donated vaccines are now arriving in 11 countries across Africa, including Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, to help the fight against COVID-19.

This is the first batch of 80 million being donated via COVAX – because we know no one is safe until everyone is safe.

The UK continues to support Ghana's COVID-19 response: putting UK experts at the heart of Ghana's Health Service and the Ministry of health, supporting the Ministry of Health to expand quality COVID-19 treatment and testing in 40 underserved districts whilst ensuring continuation of essential health services for women and children.

### **Further information**

- the following footage is available at this [WeTransfer link](#) – Wockhart facility in the UK: Vaccine vial production for AstraZeneca. AstraZeneca vaccines stored in refrigerated warehouse operated by Movianto in the UK
- the 9 million Oxford-AstraZeneca doses being donated are not needed for the domestic rollout. The doses will be UK-branded
- 5 million vaccines are being offered to COVAX, the global scheme to get COVID-19 vaccines to developing countries, to be delivered to the most vulnerable countries. Further details will be announced in due course
- the vaccine doses being donated on a bilateral basis are being transported by Crown Agents
- the UK provided £90 million to support the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine: £25m on the initial research & development and £65m to scale up manufacturing
- these vaccines were developed by the University of Oxford, made by Oxford Biomedica in Oxford and packaged in North Wales
- the UK made it clear as part of that funding that the vaccine should be affordable around the world and consequently, AstraZeneca agreed to distribute it at a non-profit price during the pandemic
- the cost of this donation has been funded through UK Overseas Development Assistance and will come over and above the ODA spending target of 0.5% of GNI if needed
- Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance is a public-private partnership that helps vaccinate half the world's children against some of the world's deadliest diseases. Since its inception in 2000, Gavi has helped to immunise a whole generation – over 822 million children – and prevented more than 14 million deaths, helping to halve child mortality in 73 lower-income countries. Gavi also plays a key role in improving global health security by supporting health systems as well as funding global stockpiles for Ebola, cholera, meningitis and yellow fever vaccines. After two decades of progress, Gavi is now focused on protecting the next generation and reaching the unvaccinated children still being left behind, employing innovative finance and the latest technology – from

drones to biometrics – to save millions more lives, prevent outbreaks before they can spread and help countries on the road to self-sufficiency. Learn more at [www.gavi.org](http://www.gavi.org) and connect with us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)

- the Vaccine Alliance brings together developing country and donor governments, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the World Bank, the vaccine industry, technical agencies, civil society, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and other private sector partners. View the full list of donor governments and other leading organizations that fund Gavi's work [here](#)
- COVAX, the vaccines pillar of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, is co-led by CEPI, Gavi and WHO – working in partnership with developed and developing country vaccine manufacturers, UNICEF, the World Bank, and others. It is the only global initiative that is working with governments and manufacturers to ensure COVID-19 vaccines are available worldwide to both high-income and lower-income countries.

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## [Nick Harris appointed Chief Executive at new-look 'National Highways'](#)

This comes as Highways England and the Department for Transport announced that Highways England will change its name to 'National Highways', heralding a new era for strategic roads. This reflects the new focus the company has on delivering the government's £27bn strategic roads investment programme, while also continuing to set highways standards for the whole UK.

The strategic road network plays a key role in levelling up by connecting England's regions, ports and international trade corridors.

Nick will lead the organisation as it delivers this significant investment, and looks towards the future opportunities offered by automation and digitisation as well as delivering the government's net zero target.

Highways England Chair, Dipesh J Shah OBE said:

I am delighted to appoint Nick as our CEO. Now, more than ever, our infrastructure schemes have an important and perhaps unique role to play in helping our economy to recover.

Nick's steady hand throughout the last few months has established a solid foundation to help us on our journey to transform how we work with our supply chain, how we deliver our net zero carbon and how we realise our digitalisation ambitions.

Nick joined Highways England in 2016 and has been Acting Chief Executive since February 2021. He has the proven track record needed to lead and transform a large and complex organisation. His experience in deploying large scale contracting and supply chain management coupled with extensive operational delivery expertise will take the company forward as it delivers on the £27bn investment into the strategic road network.

He will have a particular focus on continued road safety improvements and the transformation of National Highways as a global leader in road building and maintenance, as well as delivering world class health and safety. His permanent appointment is the conclusion of a broad and rigorous recruitment process.

Nick Harris said:

I am pleased to be taking up the reins at such an exciting time. We have achieved a great deal and there is still more to be done.

As we deliver the second roads investment strategy ensuring the safety of all road users, the delivery of our work and the benefits to our customers remains at the centre of our organisation.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

Nick will be an excellent CEO and I'm looking forward to continuing to work closely with him as we build back better across the country.

Nick will steer Highways England into an exciting new chapter, as it evolves into National Highways and delivers on our £27bn plan to improve our roads and make journeys safer, smoother and greener.

## **General enquiries**

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

## **Media enquiries**

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

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# Performance Update – August 2021

The [latest official monthly statistics](#) details our performance on Planning Appeals for the 12 month period to the end of July 2021 for cases in England.

The Planning Inspectorate delivers an appeals, examinations and applications service in England and Wales. We support a fair planning system through deciding planning, enforcement and specialist casework appeals; helping communities shape where they live by examining local plans; and help meet future infrastructure needs by reviewing national infrastructure applications.

Our performance statistics currently only cover our appeals casework. In summary:

- we made 18,123 appeal decisions in the last 12 months, an average of over 1500 per month
- the mean average time to make an appeal decision across all types of casework in the last 12 months was 27 weeks
- at the end of July 2021, we had 11,982 open cases. This is an increase of 173 (1.5%), from the previous month

## **How long appeals take**

- a householder appeal proceeding by written representations in July 21 was taking 20 weeks to decide on (mean) average
- for s78 planning appeals, the (mean) average for written representations was 26 weeks. There were 623 decisions in July 21
- planning appeals progressing by hearing (virtual or physical) have a (mean) average decision time of 525 weeks comparable to performance over the past year. Numbers of hearings and decisions are returning to pre-pandemic levels. There were 67 hearing decisions in July 21
- the mean average time to make a decision, across all cases in the last 12 months (Aug 20 to Jul 21), was 27 weeks. The median time is 23 weeks
- the median time to decide a case decreased by 0.6 weeks between June and July 21, with the median being 21.4 weeks
- for Inquiries, the (mean) average for July 21 was 79 weeks, for Written Representations the (mean) average for July 21 was 20 weeks and for Hearings the (mean) average for July 21 was 44 weeks. There were 38 inquiry decisions in July 21
- the median time for planning appeals decided by inquiry under the Rosewell Process over the 12 months to July 21 is 35 weeks. This is quicker than other types of casework decided by inquiry
- for enforcement appeals, (mean) average decision times are 32 weeks for written representations, 64.1 for hearings and 90.6 for inquiries

We realise that some appellants have had to wait longer than usual for a decision. We are working hard to meet the demand on our services and will be holding a high number of hearings and inquiries over the coming months.

## Local plan examinations

In July, five local plan examinations were concluded and two new plans were submitted for examination. As of 13 August we have 67 live examinations.

## National Infrastructure examinations

See the register of applications on the [National Infrastructure Planning website](#) for a list of pre-application, live and decided applications. As of 17 August 2021, there is currently one application at the acceptance stage, 10 applications at the pre-examination stage, four are currently being examined, five have reached recommendation stage and 10 are at the decision stage.

## Returning to face to face events this autumn

Following the government's announcement to relax coronavirus restrictions from 19 July we have been making arrangements for a return to in person events hosted by Local Planning Authorities.

We issued an [update on this on 15 July](#).

For hearings and inquiries taking place from 13 September we will be reverting to the pre-pandemic approach of them being arranged by local authorities. In-person events will be possible, but where participants (including the inspector) need to present their evidence or participate virtually this will need to be facilitated by the local authority.

Where in-person elements are planned, the local authority will need to be prepared for the event to be held fully virtually in case pandemic restrictions change.

See the [latest guidance on our current casework arrangements](#).

## Towards a future model for events

The Inspectorate is also undertaking further work on a longer-term, sustained approach to hearings and inquiries, considering the best practice approach for running events whilst building on what we have learnt during the pandemic.

We are currently engaging and consulting with staff, stakeholders and customers about how we should work in the future. We expect both blended (which include in-person elements) and virtual events to be part of our future operating model.

One of the key questions we will need to decide on, following research and engagement, is what the balance should be between physical and virtual within and across different case types. The events being run by local authorities from 13 September will provide us with valuable evidence to help shape our thinking. We expect to be able to share more on the future operating model

for events in early 2022.

## **Casework transferring to new service in Wales from 1 October**

From 1 October all casework in Wales (except UK national infrastructure projects) will transfer to the Planning and Environment Decisions Wales / Penderfyniadau Cynllunio ac Amgylchedd Cymru, part of Welsh Government.

Planning Inspectorate Wales' inspectors and support staff will transfer to Welsh Government to carry out these functions. Robust governance arrangements have been established to ensure that inspectors continue to determine appeals and other casework with the same objectivity and impartiality as before.

Further details on transition arrangements for existing cases and new processes for submitting appeals or other cases in Wales will be issued in coming weeks and shared on our website pages.

We will keep customers informed of developments and improvements to our services. Follow us for updates:

[Twitter](#)

[LinkedIn](#)

[Planning Inspectorate blog](#)

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## **E3 Statement on the JCPoA: 19 August 2021**

Press release

The governments of France, Germany and the United Kingdom respond to Iranian plans to produce uranium metal.



We, the governments of France, Germany and the United Kingdom, note with grave concern the latest reports by the IAEA confirming that Iran has produced uranium metal enriched up to 20% for the first time, and has significantly increased its production capacity of uranium enriched up to 60%.

We reiterate that these are serious violations of Iran's commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Both are key steps in the development of a nuclear weapon and Iran has no credible civilian need for either measure. Our concerns are deepened by the fact that Iran has significantly limited IAEA access through withdrawing from JCPOA-agreed monitoring arrangements and ceasing application of the Additional Protocol.

Iran's activities are all the more troubling given the fact talks in Vienna have been interrupted upon Tehran's request for two months now and that Iran has not yet committed to a date for their resumption. While refusing to negotiate, Iran is instead establishing facts on the ground which make a return to the JCPOA more complicated.

Iran must halt all activities in violation of the JCPOA without delay. We urge Iran to return to the negotiations in Vienna as soon as possible with a view to bringing them to a swift, successful conclusion. We have repeatedly stressed that time is on no-one's side.

ENDS

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# ESFA appoints interim Funding Director

News story

Owen Jenkins has been appointed as ESFA's Interim Director of Funding



ESFA appoints interim Funding Director

[Owen Jenkins](#) has been appointed as ESFA's Interim Director of Funding, taking up the vacant position following John Edwards' appointment, over the summer, to Interim ESFA Chief Executive.

ESFA's Interim Chief Executive, John Edwards said:

Owen takes on the role at a crucial time, as we plan and prepare for the next academic year and work to support the department in post-pandemic recovery, skills reform and many other areas. I know he will be a valuable member of our Executive Team and will bring his wealth of experience to lead the Funding Directorate over the coming period.

ESFA's Interim Funding Director, Owen said:

I'm thrilled and privileged to have the opportunity to lead the Funding Directorate over the coming months. Having worked in education funding for over 10 years, both in local government and in the ESFA, and working as Deputy Director in the Funding Directorate, I know how important timely and accurate funding is for schools and education providers to be able to deliver excellent standards of education and training.

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