

Moderna COVID-19 vaccine approved by MHRA in 12-17 year olds

Press release

The UK regulator has confirmed the vaccine is safe and effective in this age group.



An extension to the current UK approval of the Spikevax vaccine (formerly COVID-19 Vaccine Moderna) that allows its use in 12- to 17-year-olds has today been authorised by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

This Conditional Marketing Authorisation (CMA) extension granted by the MHRA is valid in Great Britain only and was approved via the [European Commission \(EC\) Decision Reliance Route](#). This is when the marketing authorisation application made by the company references the decision made by the EMA's Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use (CHMP).

Spikevax is authorised in children aged 12-17 years in Northern Ireland under the CMA extension granted by the European Medicines Agency on 23 July 2021.

Dr June Raine, MHRA Chief Executive said:

I am pleased to confirm that that the COVID-19 vaccine made by Moderna has now been authorised in 12-17 year olds. The vaccine is safe and effective in this age group.

We have in place a comprehensive safety surveillance strategy for monitoring the safety of all UK-approved COVID-19 vaccines and this surveillance will include the 12- to 17-year age group.

It is for the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation

(JCVI) to advise on whether this age group should be vaccinated with the COVID-19 vaccine made by Moderna as part of the deployment programme.

Background

- The Spikevax vaccine is already [authorised in adults aged 18 years and over](#).
- No new side effects were identified and the safety data in children was comparable with that seen in young adults. As in young adults, the majority of adverse events were mild to moderate and relating to reactogenicity, such as a sore arm or tiredness.
- More information can be found in the [Product Information](#).

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[Ministers appoint an interim chair to the PNCARRB](#)

News story

Ministers have appointed Andy Bliss QPM as Interim Chair to the Police Remuneration Review Body and National Crime Agency Remuneration Review Bodies.



Andy Bliss is a current member of the Police Remuneration Review Body and National Crime Agency Remuneration Review Bodies (PNCARRB) and has been appointed for a period of 3 months until 21 November 2021, in accordance with the Governance Code on Public Appointments.

He is a former Chief Constable of Hertfordshire Constabulary and brings essential and extensive police leadership experience to the PRRB. He is a highly active and committed member of the review bodies, drawing on his

policing experience and wider public sector knowledge.

The PRRB makes independent recommendations concerning the pay, allowances and conditions of police officers to the Home Secretary and the Northern Ireland Minister of Justice.

The NCARRB makes independent recommendations to the government on the pay and allowances of NCA officers designated with operational powers.

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[UK donates COVID-19 vaccines to Egypt](#)

The package donated by the UK was shipped via COVAX, with the support of UNICEF and WHO, and arrived in Cairo yesterday (16 August). This is part of the first tranche of the 100 million vaccines that the British Prime Minister Boris Johnson pledged the UK would share by June 2022 at the G7 Summit in Cornwall, with 30 million due to be sent by the end of the year. At least 80 million of the 100 million doses will go to COVAX.

This donation follows the recent COVAX shipment of 1.7 million doses, which the UK is also supporting. The UK was at the forefront of efforts to establish COVAX in 2020, and has provided 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.

This package, and the UK's wider support to COVAX, will help meet the need for vaccines in Egypt as the country continues to battle with Covid-19.

The British chargé d'affaires and Deputy Ambassador to Egypt, Qudsi Rasheed, said:

Yesterday, the UK sent around 300,000 vaccines to Egypt, through COVAX, the first batch of the 100 million doses our Prime Minister has pledged we will share with countries around the world within the next year. This is another milestone in our partnership with Egypt to help support the government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic and part of the UK's goal to end the pandemic by 2022.

Dr. Naeema Al Gasseer hailed on the solidarity of UK government's commitment to protect populations beyond UK and as WHO we appreciate the efforts of the United Kingdom in addition to the national efforts to scale up the vaccine intake by all, ensuring that the largest number of people around the world is covered with COVID-19 vaccines since nobody is safe unless everybody is safe.

UNICEF Representative in Egypt, Mr. Jeremy Hopkins said:

I would like to express our thanks to the UK government for their contribution. The close collaboration between the UK Government as well as our Government partners is critical to ensure we deliver vaccines at speed and protect as many people as possible against this virus. No one is safe until everyone is safe.

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 AstraZeneca vaccine. Over 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. Global vaccine demand is far outstripping supply, leaving millions of the most vulnerable unprotected, while higher vaccine coverage worldwide is one of the best shields against new variants.

[Future of channels such as ITV2 and Dave secured as Freeview licences renewed for another decade](#)

Press release

TV lovers can enjoy popular shows such as Love Island and emerging comedy on E4 and Dave for free into the next decade, as ministers extend the licences to operate the platform used to broadcast Freeview.



- Ministers decide Freeview platform will be supported until at least 2034
- Public service and commercial broadcasters can continue to deliver

content free-to-air to audiences across the UK

- Channels such as ITV 2, Dave, E4 and Film 4 will continue to benefit from nearly 99 per cent UK availability

The government is extending the five national multiplex licences for the Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) platform – better known as Freeview – until 2034. This will protect for the future the main way audiences currently enjoy a diverse range of digital TV channels for free.

It will guarantee prime spectrum – the radio waves used for transmitting signal – for commercial public service broadcasters (PSBs) such as ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5, so they can reach the maximum number of viewers in the UK as they compete with the streaming giants in a changing media landscape.

TV multiplexes are digital networks which allow many TV channels to be compressed and transmitted all at once over a single radio frequency. Freeview is hugely popular with UK audiences and is broadcast over a number of multiplexes carrying five or more TV channels, radio stations, text services and electronic programme guides.

The DTT multiplexes guarantee that PSB content is free to air and widely accessible to consumers due to their nearly 99 per cent coverage of the UK. They have become vital for the UK's TV networks – allowing the PSBs to expand their offerings with a host of new channels such as ITV2 and E4.

Media Minister John Whittingdale said:

Today we are guaranteeing the future of Freeview TV and a diverse range of much-loved news, entertainment and documentary channels well into the 2030s.

Securing the future of Freeview means people can continue to enjoy its great content while we also protect a vital medium for our public service broadcasters so they can serve audiences in the years to come.

The government launched a consultation in December 2020 seeking views on the renewal of the multiplex licences expiring in 2022 and 2026 on the DTT platform. In a [response](#) published today, ministers have decided to give Ofcom the power to carry out a renewal of all five national multiplexes until 2034.

This removes any change or disruption to Freeview that could have come about through new ownership and will provide stability and certainty to PSBs about the future of their channels on the platform.

In a further move to support the PSBs, the government will legislate to make ownership of Multiplex 2, which is currently jointly owned by Channel 4 and

ITV, contingent on PSB status. It will ensure that PSBs always have a space on the Freeview platform to serve the widest audience possible. The multiplex licences being renewed are:

- Multiplex 2 – expiring in 2022 and carrying the commercial PSB channels ITV/STV, Channel 4 and Channel 5, as well as some of their portfolio channels (e.g. ITV 2, Film 4, E4 and More4)
- Multiplex A – expiring in 2022 and carrying only commercial services including some of the commercial PSBs portfolio channels (e.g. ITVBe and 5USA) and some other commercial services (such as QVC and Quest)
- Multiplex B – expiring in 2026 and carrying PSB High Definition services including BBC One HD; ITV HD, Channel 4 HD and Channel 5 HD
- Multiplexes C and D – expiring in 2026 and carrying a range of commercial channels including Dave, Sky Arts and news channels such as Sky News, Al Jazeera and GB News

ENDS

Notes to Editors

- As set out in the [government response](#), the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport will shortly bring forward an Order made under section 243 of the Communications Act 2003, which will amend the multiplex licensing regime in Part 1 of the Broadcasting Act 1996 to:
 - Give Ofcom the power to carry out a renewal of Multiplexes 2, A, B, C, and D until 2034
 - Make ownership of Multiplex 2 contingent on PSB status
 - Include a power giving Ofcom the ability to revoke licences for spectrum management reasons with the consent of the DCMS Secretary of State but require that revocation cannot take effect before the end of 2030 and that a five year notice period must apply
 - Remove the requirement for applicants to submit technical plans and marketing proposals
 - Remove the power for Ofcom to set a Percentage of Multiplex Revenue (PMR)
- The current owners of the multiplex licences to be renewed are:
 - Multiplex 2 is licensed to Digital 3&4 Limited (D3&4), a joint ITV and Channel 4 subsidiary
 - Multiplex A is licensed to SDN, an ITV subsidiary
 - Multiplex B is licensed to BBC Freeview, a commercial subsidiary of the BBC

- Commercial multiplexes C and D are licenced to the communications infrastructure and media services company Arqiva

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[UKAEA and Hartree Centre join forces to accelerate fusion energy research using advanced computing](#)

The UK programme to deliver fusion energy – with its exciting potential to be a safe and sustainable part of the world’s future energy supply – has been given a boost by a new collaboration between the Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) and the UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA).

Under the collaboration, STFC and UKAEA will launch a Centre of Excellence in Extreme Scale Computing in Fusion, located at STFC’s Hartree Centre, at its Daresbury Laboratory in the North West of England.

STFC’s Hartree Centre is home to some of the most advanced computing, data and AI technologies in the UK, and UKAEA is a global leader in fusion energy science and technology. This collaboration will enable UKAEA to locate staff at the Hartree Centre and to grow sophisticated computing capabilities for the delivery of commercial fusion.

Fusion energy is highly attractive as part of future low-carbon energy supply, but there remain technical challenges to be overcome. These include producing and managing the ‘plasma’ – the ultra-hot gas where the fusion process happens – as well as challenges in materials and engineering design.

This collaboration will apply the latest computing systems and world-leading supercomputing and data science expertise at STFC to address some of these challenges, including understanding and modelling plasma, and producing the innovation required to develop so called ‘Digital Twins’ of future fusion power plants. These sophisticated models, running on supercomputers, are a key element for helping scientists and engineers to develop viable reactor technologies “in-silico” (in the virtual world) rather than via expensive, real world prototyping.

The converging landscape of supercomputing and Artificial Intelligence, combined with this unique collaboration, will accelerate the technology roadmap needed to make clean energy from fusion a reality and will establish the UK as an international leader in applying extreme scale computing to fusion engineering design.

About this collaboration

UKAEA and STFC, which is part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), are using complex modelling and simulation to progress understanding of fusion. This requires leading technical capabilities and access to the world's largest supercomputers, which STFC's Hartree Centre has already brought to bear across many other fields.

A major theme for the collaboration will be to exploit the predicted confluence of High-Performance Computing and Artificial Intelligence at the 'exascale' – a turning point in computing where some have suggested that computers, capable of performing one quintillion mathematical operations per second (or an 'exaflop'), will have a power comparable with the human brain.

The establishment of the joint Centre of Excellence in Extreme Scale Computing in Fusion at Daresbury Laboratory will also give UKAEA a base of operations in the North of England, closer to its new Fusion Technology Facility in South Yorkshire.

Tim Bestwick, Chief Technology Officer at the UK Atomic Energy Authority, said:

The Hartree Centre and UKAEA each have extraordinary world-leading capabilities in their fields, so this unique relationship can really accelerate the vital mission of developing sustainable fusion energy – which we believe will play a key role in our low-carbon future.

Alison Kennedy, Director at STFC's Hartree Centre, said:

This new centre will allow fusion specialists to work shoulder to shoulder with our own scientists and engineers to co-design tools and methods for accelerating the UK fusion programme. Our relationship will further enhance our current collaborations with ATOS, Nvidia, IBM and other vendors.

We are as excited as UKAEA about the UK Government's prioritisation of fusion energy in their Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution. Our own roadmap is strongly aligned with this document, and we believe strongly that Hartree Centre has unique, world-class expertise that will be essential for the timely delivery of commercial fusion energy.