

# Government announces £38 million for major new Devon road scheme

- government to fund multi-million-pound road scheme in Devon, providing vital boost to local economy as we build back better
- scheme will see an overhaul of the A382 as well as various new routes to cater for more active forms of travel
- announcement is latest example of government levelling up transport, providing better journeys for people around the country

A vital new road scheme to improve journey times, provide new cycling and walking routes and support the construction of thousands of homes in Devon will receive more than £38 million of government funding.

The project will see a major overhaul of key transport links in the county, including plans to upgrade the A382 and build a new dual carriageway near Newton Abbot.

Today's funding announcement comes as part of the government's drive to build back better from the pandemic and boost transport links across the country.

Transport Minister Baroness Vere said:

This multi-million-pound investment will totally change the transport landscape in this part of Devon.

Funding will go towards easing congestion so that motorists in the area can enjoy better, faster journeys. Not only that – the scheme involves various plans to allow pedestrians and cyclists to get around the region safely and with ease, as we also look to build back greener from the pandemic.

This government is dedicated to levelling up regions across the country and we will continue to support regional economies by investing in local transport projects like this one.

Councillor John Hart, the Leader of Devon County Council, said:

I would like to thank the Department for Transport for providing this funding.

This is the final stage of a major investment programme for the A382 corridor which is the culmination of several years of investment by the Council.

It is very important for the Newton Abbot's economy and will unlock the development of new homes and jobs, resulting in reduced journey

times, improved safety and ease congestion. It will also provide safe, high quality cycling and pedestrian routes, giving those wishing to make short journeys realistic alternative transport options.

The total cost of the scheme comes to £44.85 million, with Devon County Council providing the remaining £6.7 million alongside the Department for Transport's multi-million-pound contribution.

The project will see the A382 widened between Trago roundabout and Forches Cross, boosting capacity on the road to ease congestion and allow more motorists to access the Newton Abbot area. This will support the construction of 2,500 new homes in the region and pave the way for the local economy to continue growing in the future. A new dual carriageway between Drumbridges and Trago roundabout will also be built.

Pedestrians and cyclists will enjoy better journeys, with plans for a shared pedestrian and cycle path along the length of the road, along with a bridge to allow them to safely cross.

A shared-use path for pedestrians and cyclists will be constructed along Exeter Road, along with plans to widen the road to ease congestion.

The green light has also been given to construct the planned Jetty Marsh II connection as part of the scheme, which will provide a new road between Whitehill Cross and West Golds way, with a shared-use path adjacent to the route – reducing traffic on Exeter Road and providing better links to the A38.

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## **60 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine administered in UK**

- More than 22.6 million people in the UK have been vaccinated with both doses for the strongest possible protection
- Public urged to get vaccine when eligible

Around 72% of UK adults have received a first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, the latest figures published today (Sunday 23 May) show.

Health services across the UK have now administered a total of around 60.6 million vaccines since 8 December, including around 37.9 million people with their first dose (72%) and 22.6 million with both doses (43%), ensuring they have the strongest possible protection against COVID-19 from a second dose.

This comes as new real-world data shows the vaccines are reducing hospitalisations and deaths, saving more than 13,000 lives and preventing

39,100 hospitalisations in England by 9 May.

The government met its target of offering a vaccine to the most vulnerable by 15 April and remains on track to offer a first dose to all adults by the end of July. NHS England are sending texts inviting people to book a vaccination to those aged 32 and 33.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Matt Hancock said:

Shortly after vaccinating over 70% of adults in the UK with a first dose, we have hit yet another incredible milestone with over 60 million doses delivered in total.

Our trailblazing vaccination programme – the biggest and most successful in NHS history – is another great British success story and a testament to what can be achieved when all 4 corners of country comes together to defeat this virus.

Our country has one of the highest uptake rates in the world and I'm delighted that so many have answered our call to arms. If you have not yet come forward, and you are eligible, I urge you to take up the offer – it could save your life and protect your loved ones.

To ensure people have the strongest possible protection against COVID-19, appointments for second doses have been brought forward from 12 to 8 weeks for the remaining people in the top 9 priority groups who have yet to receive both doses.

The move follows updated advice from the independent experts at the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), which has considered the latest available evidence and has recommended reducing the dosing interval to counter the threat of new variants of concern.

Earlier this week, the government announced new decisive actions to halt the spread of the B.1.617.2 variant of concern first identified in India. Targeted activity is taking place to continue to drive vaccine uptake amongst eligible cohorts to protect the most vulnerable.

The government continues to work in close partnership with local authorities to ensure the right action is taken at the right time, and to boost uptake of the approved vaccines for those eligible in these areas.

We are also providing support to the Scottish government, who are adopting similar action to control the spread of variants in Glasgow and Moray.

The government and its scientific experts are monitoring the evolving situation and rates of variants closely, and will not hesitate to take additional action as necessary.

Vaccines Minister, Nadhim Zahawi said:

Today we hit yet another phenomenal achievement, with 60 million jabs in arms and over 4 in 10 people fully vaccinated with two doses.

I want to pay tribute to the heroic work of NHS workers, volunteers, local authorities and civil servants across the whole country who have worked tirelessly to help make this happen.

The vaccine is saving thousands of lives and provides invaluable protection from this virus, so when you get the offer please come forward for the jab.

NHS England chief executive Sir Simon Stevens said:

This latest milestone in our ongoing fight against COVID-19 is another opportunity to thank everyone again working throughout this weekend to deliver the NHS COVID-19 vaccination programme come rain or shine, through thick and thin – undoubtedly one of the greatest achievements in Health Service history.

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Brandon Lewis said:

This is a monumental moment in our fight against coronavirus. Vaccines are our sure way out of this pandemic and I want to thank our amazing NHS for delivering the biggest and most successful vaccine rollout ever in the history of the NHS.

The success of the vaccine programme highlights the United Kingdom at its best – when we are all working together. I urge everyone to get their vaccine, as soon as they are called.

Secretary of State for Wales Simon Hart said:

This is an incredible achievement and an example of what can be done when we work together as one United Kingdom.

The continued rapid roll-out of the vaccination programme is paving the way out of the pandemic and will help us to regain normality as soon as possible.

UK Government Minister for Scotland Iain Stewart said:

It's superb to hear more great news about the vaccine rollout. This milestone underscores the incredible progress we are making right across the country in our fight against COVID-19.

The UK government is supplying vaccines for people in all parts of the United Kingdom, and our fantastic NHS is working tirelessly to administer first and second doses.

I'd encourage everyone to please take up the invitation to get the jab when it comes to help us all through this pandemic.

The vaccine offers high levels of protection against symptomatic disease and even higher levels of protection against severe illness, hospitalisation and death from COVID-19. Protection increases with the second dose which is why it's vital that everyone gets both doses of the vaccine as soon as they are offered to them. Getting the vaccine makes people less likely to get infected and growing evidence shows that it also helps to prevent them from passing the virus on to others.

The latest data from Public Health England's (PHE's) real-world study shows the vaccines are already having a significant impact in the UK, reducing hospitalisations and deaths, saving at least 13,000 lives and preventing at least 39,100 hospitalisations in England by the 9 May. For the over 80s, it is estimated that 2 doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine reduces the risk of hospitalisation by 93% from the B.1.1.7 (Kent) variant.

PHE analysis also shows that individuals who receive a single dose of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine have approximately 80% lower risk of death against the B.1.1.7 coronavirus variant originating in Kent and a second dose of the vaccine can provide 85-90% protection against symptomatic disease. Protection against death from the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine rises from approximately 80% after one dose to 97% after 2 doses against the Kent variant.

A new study by PHE shows that 2 doses of the COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective against the B.1.617.2 variant first identified in India. Vaccine effectiveness against symptomatic disease from the B.1.617.2 variant is similar after 2 doses compared to the B.1.1.7 (Kent) variant dominant in the UK, and we expect to see even higher levels of effectiveness against hospitalisation and death.

Data published by YouGov shows the UK continues to top the list of nations where people are willing to have a COVID-19 vaccine or have already been vaccinated.

ONS data published on 6 May found that more than 9 in 10 (93%) adults reported positive sentiment towards the vaccine.

Approved vaccines are available from thousands of NHS 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.

### **Background information:**

- The latest UK-wide vaccination statistics are published [here](#) and NHS

England publishes vaccine statistics for England [here](#).

- PHE's real-world data on the efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines is available [here](#). Their latest study on household transmission can be found [here](#).
- The ONS survey on 'Barriers to COVID-19 vaccination' can be found [here](#).
- To date, the government has invested over £300 million into manufacturing a successful vaccine to enable a rapid roll out.
- The UK has secured early access to over 500 million doses of 8 of the most promising vaccine candidates.
- The UK government is committed to supporting equitable access to vaccines worldwide. The UK is one of the largest donors to the COVAX facility, the global mechanism to help developing countries access a coronavirus vaccine, and has committed £548 million in UK aid to help distribute 1.3 billion doses of coronavirus vaccines to 92 developing countries this year.

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## [UK's Defence Senior Advisor concludes visit to Egypt](#)

World news story

The UK Chief of Defence Staff's Senior Advisor to the Middle East & North Africa, Air Marshal Martin (Sammy) Sampson, has concludes his visit to Egypt.



During the visit, the UK Chief of Defence Staff's Senior Advisor to the Middle East & North Africa (DSAME) held high-level meetings with senior

officials from the Egyptian Armed Forces and was accompanied by British Defence Attaché to Egypt Captain (Royal Navy) Stephen Deacon.

AM Martin Sampson met with Commander of Egyptian Air Forces where both sides discussed ways to enhance bilateral cooperation between the two nations' Air Forces.

DSAME also convened meetings with Chief of Training Authority and Chief of Armament Authority, where both sides discussed topics of common interest and explored ways to deepen the future training and defence procurement engagements.

Making remarks at the end of his visit, Air Marshal Martin Sampson said:

I am delighted to be back in Egypt and to meet senior officials from the Egyptian Armed Forces. We have had very fruitful discussions about ways to reinforce our bilateral military partnership, including: joint training and exercises; operational coordination to counter terrorism and promote our common security interests in the region and our shared prosperity agendas.

British Ambassador to Egypt, Sir Geoffrey Adams, said:

Air Marshal Sampson's visit shows our continued commitment to working with Egypt to strengthen our defence relations: from defence procurement, to training, to sharing expertise. Earlier this year, the UK published a new defence strategy, alongside our Integrated Review of foreign, defence, and security policy, and that strategy makes clear the importance of partnership to our collective security and military capacity. Visits like this advance those aims. We are committed to working with Egypt in the interests of both countries' security, and we look forward to further cooperation in future.

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## [Vaccine status drives over one million new users to the NHS app](#)

The app allows easy access to coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination status for travel and wider NHS services. Over 11,000 people have registered their preference for organ donation via the app in 4 days, 10 times more than

average for that time. 90,000 people have ordered repeat prescriptions, saving clinicians and patients valuable time

Over 1.3 million new people have registered to use the NHS App since the addition of COVID-19 vaccine status was announced on 7 May.

The app, which now has over 4.8 million registered users, is one of the first internationally compliant systems in the world to demonstrate vaccine status. The COVID-19 vaccine status service allows users easily to show their proof of vaccine, if required for international travel, and has been designed in line with World Health Organisation (WHO) interim guidance.

As well as accessing COVID-19 vaccine status, people can use a wide range of personalised services, including GP appointment booking, ordering repeat prescriptions, and viewing GP and hospital records.

Since Monday 17 May, people have logged into the NHS App more than 4 million times. The boost in downloads will have life-saving benefits as over 11,483 additional people registered their preference for organ donation via the NHS App in just 4 days.

People are also accessing services more easily, with nearly 90,000 people since Monday using the app to order repeat prescriptions, saving clinicians and patients valuable time.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Matt Hancock, said:

The strides in technology and innovation we've made throughout the pandemic are having real consequences beyond fighting this virus – they're making treatment, diagnosis and care better for patients.

I want to thank all my colleagues at NHSX and NHS Digital who helped us to deliver the COVID -19 vaccine status service so quickly. The pace we've brought this to fruition is unparalleled and it is bringing immediate benefits to our wider health service. I encourage everyone to download the NHS app, it will help you access a host of services.

For anyone in England who has had 2 doses of any approved vaccine, and does not use the app or are unable to access digital services, they can call 119 and request a letter. The first 20,000 letters were delivered across England on Saturday.

Minister for Innovation, Lord Bethell, said:

It's great to see so many more people using the NHS app – it allows people to easily access their COVID-19 vaccine status, as well as easier access to NHS services.

It's prime example of how technology is making the health service



faster and easier to use.

Matthew Gould, Chief Executive of NHSX, said:

This has been stood up in a matter of weeks, by a team working every hour to ensure we delivered a user-friendly service on time.

We are really pleased with how it's been received, and even more pleased to see it get so many people using the online services of the NHS.

Between 17 May and 20 May:

- 11,483 users registered an organ donation preference via the NHS App, a daily average of 2,870. This is almost ten times the number of new registrations in April of around 300 per day.
- 89,422 prescriptions were ordered via the NHS App, a daily average of 22,355. In April the daily average of prescriptions ordered was around 13,000.
- 8,091 appointments were booked via the NHS App, a daily average of 2,002. This is double the daily average of appointments booked in April of around 1,000.

Since 10 May there have been 1,410,386 downloads of the NHS App and 1,302,611 new registered users.

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## [Vaccines highly effective against B.1.617.2 variant after 2 doses](#)

Vaccine effectiveness against symptomatic disease from the B.1.617.2 variant is similar after 2 doses compared to the B.1.1.7 (Kent) variant dominant in the UK, and we expect to see even higher levels of effectiveness against hospitalisation and death.

The [study found](#) that, for the period from 5 April to 16 May:

- the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine was 88% effective against symptomatic disease from the B.1.617.2 variant 2 weeks after the second dose, compared to 93% effectiveness against the B.1.1.7 variant
- 2 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine were 60% effective against symptomatic disease from the B.1.617.2 variant compared to 66% effectiveness against the B.1.1.7 variant
- both vaccines were 33% effective against symptomatic disease from B.1.617.2, 3 weeks after the first dose compared to around 50%

effectiveness against the B.1.1.7 variant

The analysis included data for all age groups from 5 April to cover the period since the B.1.617.2 variant emerged. It included 1,054 people confirmed as having the B.1.617.2 variant through genomic sequencing, including participants of several ethnicities. Data published on Thursday 20 May for vaccine effectiveness covered the period since December for those aged over 65.

The difference in effectiveness between the vaccines after 2 doses may be explained by the fact that rollout of second doses of AstraZeneca was later than for the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, and other data on antibody profiles show it takes longer to reach maximum effectiveness with the AstraZeneca vaccine.

As with other variants, even higher levels of effectiveness are expected against hospitalisation and death. There are currently insufficient cases and follow-up periods to estimate vaccine effectiveness against severe outcomes from the B.1.617.2 variant. PHE will continue to evaluate this over the coming weeks.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

This new evidence is groundbreaking – and proves just how valuable our COVID-19 vaccination programme is in protecting the people we love.

We can now be confident that over 20 million people – more than 1 in 3 – have significant protection against this new variant, and that number is growing by the hundreds of thousands every single day as more and more people get that vital second dose. I want to thank the scientists and clinicians who have been working around the clock to produce this research.

It's clear how important the second dose is to secure the strongest possible protection against COVID-19 and its variants – and I urge everyone to book in their jab when offered.

Dr Mary Ramsay, Head of Immunisation at PHE, said:

This study provides reassurance that 2 doses of either vaccine offer high levels of protection against symptomatic disease from the B.1.617.2 variant.

We expect the vaccines to be even more effective at preventing hospitalisation and death, so it is vital to get both doses to gain maximum protection against all existing and emerging variants.

Minister for COVID-19 Vaccine Deployment Nadhim Zahawi said:

Almost every day we get more and more encouraging evidence about the difference our COVID-19 vaccines are making to people's lives – with 13,000 lives saved and 39,100 hospitalisations prevented overall.

Today's data is astounding and a true reflection of just how important it is to get both your jabs when offered.

I encourage all those offered an appointment to get their jab booked in as soon as possible and take full advantage of the high levels of protection the vaccines bring.

Separate PHE analysis indicates that the COVID-19 vaccination programme has so far prevented 13,000 deaths and around 39,100 hospitalisations in older people in England, up to 9 May.