

MOD confirms licence awarded for work at Dalgety Bay

News story

Work to clean up radioactive material at Dalgety Bay is now able to begin after the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) granted the required licence to MOD contractors, Balfour Beatty.



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The issue of the licence means that work can begin on site from Monday 17 May 2021.

Minister for Defence Procurement, Jeremy Quin said:

We are pleased that the SEPA licence has now been granted for Dalgety Bay and we have received confirmation from our contractor Balfour Beatty that they will commence work on this phase on the afternoon of Monday 17th May 2021.

A contract worth £10.5-million was awarded to Balfour Beatty by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation to carry out remediation works to the beach and foreshore.

The project will clear the beach of contaminant material and put a barrier in place to prevent any other material coming to the surface.

The jetty and slipway will also be replaced.

Published 19 May 2021

7 in 10 UK adults receive first dose of coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine

- More than 70% of adults in the UK have been vaccinated with a first dose of a coronavirus (COVID-19) jab
- Nearly 40% of people have been vaccinated with both doses
- Public urged to get vaccine when eligible to help protect against threat of new variants

More than 70% of UK adults have received a first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, the latest figures published today (Wednesday 19 May) show.

Health services across the UK have now administered a total of 57.8 million vaccines between 8 December and 18 May, including 36.9 million people with their first dose (70.2%) and 20.8 million with both doses (39.6%), ensuring they have the strongest possible protection against COVID-19 from a second dose.

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 will be sending texts inviting people to book a vaccination to those aged 37 and 36.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

Vaccines are turning the tide against this pandemic and I'm incredibly proud the UK has one of the highest uptake rates in the world, with 90% of people saying that they have had or will have the jab.

Strong evidence shows the vaccines protect you and your loved ones from serious illness and they also reduce transmission, which is why we've introduced additional surge measures in the areas with rising cases of the variant first identified in India.

Thank you to everybody who has come forward so far – we can beat this virus together if we all play our part and get the jab as soon as we're eligible.

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.

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:

This is a terrific achievement and is testament to the dedication of NHS workers, volunteers, local authorities and civil servants in every corner of the UK.

We are doubling down on efforts to offer over-50s and the most vulnerable a second dose to maximise their protection against COVID-19, while continuing to progress first doses for people aged 36 and over.

I urge everybody of all races, religions and genders to come forward for a jab as soon as you're eligible.

NHS England's lead for the COVID-19 vaccination programme, Dr Emily Lawson, said:

The fastest and most successful NHS vaccination programme in history continues to roll out at speed thanks to NHS staff and volunteers, with 7 in 10 adults receiving their life-saving jab and 2 in 5 receiving both doses.

Bookings are booming with over a million appointments made in less than a week since the NHS vaccination programme opened up to people in their 30s – people aged 36 and 37 can now book their jab.

Our message remains clear: when you are invited for your jab please attend – this could save your life and the people around you.

Vaccinated people are far less likely to get COVID-19 with symptoms. Vaccinated people are even more unlikely to get serious COVID-19, to be admitted to hospital, or to die from it. There is growing evidence that vaccinated people are less likely to pass the virus to others.

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 more than 11,700 lives and preventing 33,000 hospitalisations in England by the end of April.

New PHE analysis shows that individuals who receive a single dose of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine have approximately 80% lower risk of death with COVID-19 compared with unvaccinated individuals. The report also shows

protection against death from the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine rises from approximately 80% after 1 dose to 97% after 2 doses.

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.

[Latest UK-wide COVID-19 vaccination statistics](#)

[COVID-19 vaccine statistics for England](#)

[PHE's real-world data on the efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines](#)

[PHE's latest study on household transmission](#)

[ONS survey on barriers to COVID-19 vaccination](#)

[YouGov data comparing uptake rates in countries around the world](#)

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 517 million doses of 8 of the most promising vaccine candidates. This includes agreements with:

- BioNTech/Pfizer for 100 million doses
- Oxford/AstraZeneca for 100 million doses
- Moderna for 17 million doses
- Janssen for 30 million doses
- Novavax for 60 million doses
- Valneva for 100 million doses
- GlaxoSmithKline and Sanofi Pasteur for 60 million doses
- CureVac for 50 million doses

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.

The surge measures introduced in Bolton include:

- increasing the delivery of vaccines through the 3 existing local vaccination sites and existing vaccine bus
- establishing an additional vaccine bus that will also target walk-in

appointments

- NHS professionals supporting rapid deployment of additional workforce, with St John's Ambulance providing volunteers on a roving basis to target local businesses reaching out to those unable to take time off work
- extending pop-up sites, including at a community wedding venue
- expanding community engagement plans with supporting communications and direct engagement with local communities

The surge measures introduced in Blackburn with Darwen include:

- extending opening hours at Burnley vaccination centre
- extending capacity at Blackburn Crypt vaccination centre, with plans being developed to take Pfizer vaccine
- increasing community pharmacy provision
- expanding a proactive communications campaign engaging local communities
- developing additional pop-up sites as needed

See also: [‘Most vulnerable offered second dose of COVID-19 vaccine earlier to help protect against variants ‘](#)

Business Secretary co-chairs second UK Steel Council meeting of 2021: 19 May

Building on the UK government's ongoing dialogue with the steel industry about how best to decarbonise the sector, Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng co-chaired the latest UK Steel Council meeting today (19 May), along with the Chair of UK Steel, Luis Sanz. Representatives from the 6 major steel companies in the UK, trade unions and the devolved administrations were also in attendance.

At the meeting, the Business Secretary underscored the UK government's commitment to working in partnership with the steel industry to support its transition to a competitive, sustainable and low carbon future, while acknowledging the scale of the challenge.

Industry body UK Steel presented its draft roadmap for how to achieve net zero steel production. Attendees agreed that the roadmap was a positive first step, and that the proposals would be further refined through a wider range of discussions with industry stakeholders in time for the government to consider them ahead of the next meeting in July.

There was a high level discussion about possible timescales for the decarbonisation of the sector and the government policies that would be required to achieve them.

The meeting came as the government published the latest [public steel procurement data](#), showing that at least £108 million of the reported £148 million of steel purchased by the UK government in 2019 to 2020 was sourced from UK producers. The new statistics also suggest that over the next decade the government will need an estimated 7.6 million tonnes of steel for public infrastructure plans, up from last year's estimate of 5 million.

The UK government is making a record investment in infrastructure as part of our capital spending plans worth £100 billion next year. This is an excellent opportunity to promote the unique selling points of UK steel and explore how best to position the sector for success in forthcoming major public contracts, because the UK produces some of the best quality steel in the world.

Earlier this year, a joint UK Steel – BEIS Procurement Taskforce, chaired by Investment Minister Lord Grimstone, met for the first time to discuss difficulties reported by the sector in securing major public contracts and what can be done to address them. It is expected that the next meeting of the Procurement Taskforce will be held before the end of June.

The government is currently reviewing its public procurement rules to ensure the system is better able to meet the needs of this country now we have left the European Union.

The Steel Council will continue to meet regularly over the coming year. Today's attendees included:

- Business Secretary, Kwasi Kwarteng
- Energy Minister, Anne-Marie Trevelyan
- Minister for Investment, Lord Grimstone
- Luis Sanz, Chair of UK Steel and CEO, Celsa
- Gareth Stace, Director General, UK Steel
- Sandip Biswas, Chairman Tata Steel UK, Executive Director and CFO Tata Steel Europe
- Huiming Li, Chairman British Steel
- Jon Ferriman, CEO, Liberty Steel,
- David Bond, Managing Director, Sheffield Forgemasters
- David Scaife, Director, Outokumpu
- Roy Rickhuss, Community Union
- Harish Patel, Unite Union
- Ross Murdoch, GMB Union
- Vaughan Gething, Economy Minister, Welsh Government
- Chris McDonald, CEO, Materials Processing Institute

[Girls' education and ending violence](#)

against women and girls focus of world-leading experts

World-leading experts today focussed on the importance of girls' education and ending violence against women and girls at the second meeting of the Gender Equality Advisory Council (GEAC) under the UK's G7 Presidency.

The meeting saw Cynthia Nyongesa, Youth Leader from the Global Partnership for Education, speak with the Council about the transformative impact education can have on girls' lives and her work as an advocate in Kenya.

Alongside this, the Home Secretary, Rt Hon Priti Patel, discussed the Home Office's Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy, which will work together with a complementary Domestic Abuse Strategy to improve support for victims, achieve better outcomes through the criminal justice system and improve approaches to dealing with perpetrators.

GEAC member Dr Denis Mukwege spoke on tackling violence against women and girls and preventing sexual violence in conflict.

Minister for Women & Equalities, Liz Truss, and the Council's Chair, distinguished author and journalist Sarah Sands, convened the meeting of world-leading experts including scientists, vaccinologists and business leaders, across the G7 countries and beyond. This included Professor Sarah Gilbert, CERN Director-General Dr Fabiola Gianotti and Harvard Professor Iris Bohnet.

The Council will build on work done by former G7 presidencies, and the Gender Equality Advisory Councils convened by Canada in 2018 and France in 2019, and champion the core principles of freedom, opportunity and dignity for women and girls around the world.

It will set out recommendations to leaders at the G7 Summit in June on how to ensure that women across the globe are at the forefront of the pandemic recovery and at the heart of the build back better agenda.

[Members](#) have been selected from each of the G7 countries and beyond, united by their commitment to democracy and women's empowerment.

The [first meeting](#) of the GEAC took place in April.

ESFA Update: 19 May 2021

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