

Government hits vaccination target as PM praises “precious protection” offered by jabs

Press release

All adults over 50, the clinically vulnerable and health and social care workers have now been offered a life-saving Covid-19 jab.



All adults over 50, the clinically vulnerable and health and social care workers have now been offered a life-saving Covid-19 jab, as the government prepares to move into the next phase of the Covid-19 vaccination programme.

The target was reached ahead of schedule, with the government having pledged to offer a first dose to priority cohorts 1-9 by 15 April.

Nearly 40 million vaccines have now been given in total, with adults under 50 expected to begin to be invited in the coming days.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

We have now passed another hugely significant milestone in our vaccine programme by offering jabs to everyone in the nine highest risk groups.

That means more than 32 million people have been given the precious protection vaccines provide against Covid-19.

I want to thank everyone involved in the vaccine rollout which has already saved many thousands of lives.

We will now move forward with completing essential second doses and making progress towards our target of offering all adults a vaccine by the end of July.

The JCVI are expected to publish their final advice on how the government should vaccinate those aged under 50.

This advice will pave the way for the next phase of the vaccination programme, which is expected to begin this week.

NHS organisations in the four nations, in collaboration with devolved administrations, will decide how to operationalise the JCVI advice.

It is thought that people in England in their late 40s will be the first to be invited to book their jabs.

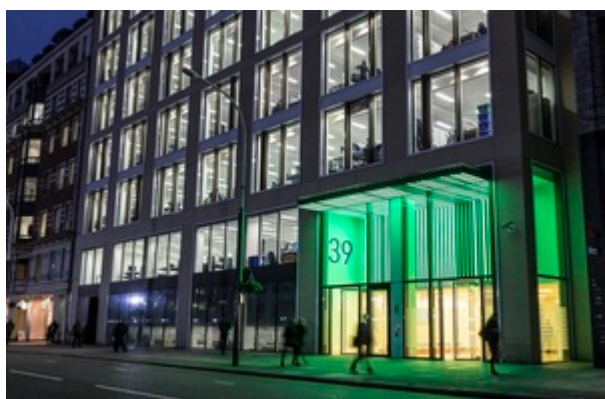
Over 7 million second doses have now been given – with a record 475,230 given on Saturday – and we remain on track to offer a first vaccine to all adults by 31 July.

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[Surge testing to be deployed in Wandsworth and Lambeth](#)

Press release

NHS Test and Trace is providing additional testing across parts of South London where the variant first identified in South Africa has been found.



Working in partnership with the local authorities, NHS Test and Trace is providing additional testing and genomic sequencing across parts of South London, predominantly the boroughs of Wandsworth and Lambeth, where 44 confirmed cases, and 30 probable cases, of the variant first identified in South Africa have been found. All identified cases are isolating or have completed their isolation, and their contacts have been traced and asked to isolate.

The first case of the variant in the area was identified in early March.

Everybody aged 11 years and over who resides in, works in, or travels through these boroughs is strongly encouraged to take a COVID-19 PCR test, whether they are showing symptoms or not. This is the largest surge testing operation to date and aims to help control and suppress any possible new cases of the COVID-19 variant first identified in South Africa.

Enhanced contact tracing is used for individuals testing positive with a variant of concern. This is where contact tracers look back over an extended period in order to determine the route of transmission. By using PCR testing, positive results can be sent for genomic sequencing at specialist laboratories, helping us to identify variant of concern cases and their spread in these boroughs. People in Lambeth and Wandsworth should continue using twice-weekly rapid testing alongside the PCR test as part of surge testing.

People with symptoms should book a free test online or by phone so they can get tested at a testing site or have a testing kit sent to them at home. Those without symptoms should visit the [Lambeth](#) or [Wandsworth](#) local authority website for more information.

Dr Susan Hopkins, Chief Medical Adviser for NHS Test and Trace said:

The cluster of cases of the variant first identified in South Africa found in parts of South London, predominantly the Lambeth and Wandsworth areas is significant. It's really important people in the local area play their part in stopping any further spread within the local community.

PCR testing is now available for all and I would strongly encourage everyone, whether they live, work or travel through the boroughs, to get tested even if they don't have any symptoms of coronavirus.

Around 1 in 3 people with COVID-19 don't show any symptoms. By taking part you can protect yourselves and your loved ones and help us identify any possible new cases that would otherwise be missed, preventing further transmission and saving lives.

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[Ukraine: G7 Foreign Ministers'](#)

statement on Crimea

Press release

A statement from the Foreign Ministers of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and the High Representative of the European Union.



We, the G7 foreign ministers of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States of America and the High Representative of the European Union are deeply concerned by the large ongoing build-up of Russian military forces on Ukraine's borders and in illegally-annexed Crimea.

These large-scale troop movements, without prior notification, represent threatening and destabilising activities. We call on Russia to cease its provocations and to immediately de-escalate tensions in line with its international obligations. In particular, we call on Russia to uphold the OSCE principles and commitments that it has signed up to on transparency of military movements and to respond to the procedure established under Chapter III of the Vienna Document.

Recalling our last statement of 18 March, we reaffirm our unwavering support for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. We support Ukraine's posture of restraint.

We underline our strong appreciation and continued support for France's and Germany's efforts through the Normandy Process to secure the full implementation of the Minsk agreements, which is the only way forward for a lasting political solution to the conflict. We call on all sides to engage constructively in the Trilateral Contact Group on the OSCE's proposals to confirm and consolidate the ceasefire.

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[Review into the Development and Use of Supply Chain Finance in Government](#)

News story

Announcement of a Review into the Development and Use of Supply Chain Finance (and associated schemes) in Government.



A Review into the Development and Use of Supply Chain Finance (and associated schemes) related to Greensill Capital in Government, led by Nigel Boardman, has been announced by the Government today.

The Prime Minister has asked Mr Boardman to conduct a review that will look into the decisions taken around the development and use of supply chain finance (and associated schemes) in government, especially the role of Lex Greensill and Greensill Capital.

Mr Boardman will have access to all necessary government information required to conduct the review and will engage with those involved at the time when decisions were made and will report his findings to the Prime Minister no later than the end of June 2021. He will pause his work as a non-executive Director of BEIS while the review is carried out.

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New government service launched to support quarantine compliance

News story

Those quarantining at home following international travel may now be visited by staff employed on behalf of the NHS Test and Trace service.



The government has launched a service to carry out further visits on people who have a duty to quarantine following international travel.

It is still illegal to holiday overseas and those entering the country following international travel must quarantine for a period of 10 days at a managed quarantine site or the address listed on their passenger locator form. Compliance is critical to reduce the risk of Variants of Concern entering the UK.

Those quarantining at home may be visited by staff employed on behalf of the NHS Test and Trace service. These checks will be in addition to those already carried out by police officers, who make up to 1,000 home visits per day.

NHS Test and Trace staff will not have any enforcement powers, however, a referral will be made to the police if NHS Test and Trace staff have a reason to believe that an individual may be breaching quarantine rules. Officers will consider enforcement action following further investigation.

Individuals who fail to comply could be issued with a fixed penalty notice, starting at £1,000 and increasing up to £10,000 for repeat offences. Mitie was awarded the contract to carry out the NHS Test and Trace visits following a government procurement exercise.

These checks are in addition to the work by the Isolation Assurance and Compliance Service to contact everyone returning from non-red list countries that are staying in England and Northern Ireland.

People are called in order to check their status and to provide advice on the need to self-isolate and what to do if they are experiencing symptoms. They are also given information about taking tests on day 2 and day 8 of their

self-isolation period. These calls are made repeatedly, alongside text messages where necessary. Any concerns can then be escalated to decide whether further checks are needed.

Those returning from “red list” countries must continue to stay in a managed quarantine site.

Last week, the government has set out a framework to chart the safe return of international travel, which could resume from 17 May at the earliest. This will see a traffic light system categorise countries based on risk alongside the restrictions required for travel.

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