

# Government secures 5 million doses of Moderna vaccine

- Government concludes negotiations with Moderna to secure access to 5 million doses of its promising coronavirus vaccine
- vaccine could be delivered to the UK from Spring 2021, if approved by the medicines regulator
- deal increases total number of doses secured by the UK to 355 million, as part of government's strategy to build a diverse portfolio of promising vaccines

The UK government has completed negotiations with biotech company Moderna to secure access to 5 million doses of its promising vaccine, enough for around 2.5 million people, the Business Secretary announced today (Monday 16 November).

If it meets robust standards of safety and effectiveness and approved by the medicines regulator, the vaccine could be delivered to the UK and Europe as early as Spring 2021 with the potential for the government to procure more doses next year.

This would follow the first deliveries of the Pfizer/BioNTech and the Oxford University/AstraZeneca vaccines which, once final data from their phase 3 clinical trials has been published and if they receive regulatory approval, could be available before the end of the year.

The agreement is part of the government's strategy to develop a diverse portfolio of vaccines, increasing the UK's chances of securing access to a promising vaccine. Today's deal means the government has put in place agreements with 7 different developers and has secured 355 million vaccine doses, giving the UK the best possible chance of protecting the public from coronavirus as soon as possible.

The news comes as Moderna today publishes initial data showing that its candidate is nearly 95% effective in protecting against COVID-19, with no safety issues identified to date. The safety data is still to be released by Moderna to show whether the vaccine is both safe and effective.

Until a vaccine is found to meet robust standards of safety and effectiveness, the public must continue to take necessary actions to keep themselves and their loved ones safe, including following the Hands, Face, Space guidance and other public health advice.

Business Secretary Alok Sharma said:

Today's announcement is on top of the 350 million doses the UK has already secured from a range of other vaccine developers, putting us towards the front of the international pack on a per capita

basis.

The speed at which scientists around the world have worked on a vaccine has been incredible, and it is thanks to their ingenuity that we are on the cusp of one of the biggest scientific breakthroughs in recent years.

While this is exciting news, I urge the public to not be complacent – we are at a critical point in the pandemic and in order to save lives we must continue to follow guidance by maintaining social distancing, wearing face masks and washing our hands regularly.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock said:

Today's announcement is excellent news and an encouraging step forward in our fight against COVID-19.

We have moved swiftly to secure 5 million doses of this hugely promising vaccine meaning we are even better placed to vaccinate everyone who will benefit should the rigorous safety standards be met.

But we are not there yet. Until science can make us safe, we must remain vigilant and keep following the rules that we know can keep this virus under control.

Moderna is currently conducting phase 3 clinical trials of its vaccine and is using mRNA vaccine technology.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has started a rolling review of Moderna's vaccine. MHRA will carefully and scientifically review the safety, quality and effectiveness data once it has all been submitted to determine how it protects people from COVID-19 and the level of protection it provides.

The data must include results from the lab and clinical trials; manufacturing and quality controls, product sampling, and testing of the final product.

Once they have thoroughly reviewed the data, the MHRA will seek advice from the government's independent advisory body, the Commission on Human Medicines. They will critically assess the data too before advising the government on the safety, quality and effectiveness of any potential vaccine.

The MHRA is globally recognised for requiring the highest standards of safety, quality and effectiveness for any vaccine.

Chair of the government's Vaccine Taskforce Kate Bingham said:

Today's news from Moderna is very encouraging. The Moderna mRNA vaccine has posted excellent efficacy data to date from its initial

phase 3 readout. The vaccine uses mRNA technology demonstrating that these novel vaccines are showing early promise in being effective against COVID-19.

The government has now signed agreements with seven vaccine developers to secure the most promising vaccines for the UK. The government's Vaccine Taskforce are pursuing a portfolio approach to obtaining vaccines for the UK across different vaccine formats, to maximise the chances of finding safe and effective vaccines.

We will continue to monitor the field of promising vaccines, and are very encouraged by the effectiveness shown by these early frontrunners, but we must remain vigilant to the fact that no vaccine is yet approved for use by regulators.

We have secured early access to over 355 million vaccines doses through agreements with several separate vaccine developers at various stages of trials, including:

- 100 million doses of University of Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine – phase 3 clinical trials
- 40 million doses of BioNTech/Pfizer vaccine – phase 3 clinical trials
- 5 million doses of Moderna vaccine – phase 3 clinical trials
- 60 million doses of Novavax vaccine – phase 3 clinical trials
- 60 million doses of Valneva vaccine – pre-clinical trials
- 60 million doses of GSK/Sanofi Pasteur vaccine – phase 1 clinical trials
- 30 million doses of Janssen vaccine – phase 2 clinical trials

We have invested over £230 million into manufacturing any successful vaccine and an enormous amount of planning and preparation has taken place across government to be able to quickly roll out the vaccine, including ensuring we have adequate provision, transport, PPE and logistical expertise to do so. We are also working at pace to prepare for the delivery of any potential COVID-19 vaccination programme as quickly as possible.

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## [Health and Social Care Secretary's statement on coronavirus \(COVID-19\): 16 November 2020](#)

Good afternoon and welcome to today's Downing Street coronavirus briefing.

I'm joined today by Professor Jonathan Van Tam, Deputy Chief Medical Officer and Dr Susan Hopkins, the Chief Medical Advisor to NHS Test and Trace.

Before we talk about testing and vaccines, I'd like to update you on the latest coronavirus data.

The average number of new cases each day is now 25,329 up from 22,443 last week.

There are today 14,915 COVID-19 patients in hospital across the UK, compared to 13,025 a week ago.

And, sadly, yesterday 168 deaths were reported.

This means that in the last week we've seen an average of 413 deaths, up from 332 a day a week ago.

My profound sympathies are with everyone who've lost a loved one throughout this pandemic. These numbers make painfully clear, this virus remains a potent threat. And that threat is not just to the oldest and most vulnerable but to anyone, of any age, and of any background.

We have already seen the serious impact that long COVID can have on peoples' quality of life, even the fit and the young. Symptoms like fatigue, breathlessness, muscle pain, and neurological problems long after they first had the virus.

We know that long COVID affects thousands of people, many thousands of people. We have already opened long COVID clinics in many parts of the country. And I am very pleased to be able to confirm that the NHS will have a network of 40 long COVID clinics right across England in place by the end of the month.

They will bring together doctors, nurses, therapists and other NHS staff like physios to help those suffering with the long-term effects of coronavirus. Long COVID shows that this virus can strike us all, and we must all do our bit to strike back by following the rules and denying the virus the connections that it needs to spread.

I know that this has not been easy and that it has meant celebrating Diwali or commemorating the fallen in ways that have been different this year from what we might normally do.

I want to say thank you to everyone for their patience. We must persevere and get this virus under control. Coronavirus is not a short term problem that can easily be fixed. We must focus on the long term solutions, underpinned by the best possible science that can see us through this crisis and also lay firm foundations for the future.

## **Testing capacity**

This includes our ability to test at scale. We're constantly improving our response, to bring the confidence that high-quality testing can provide. We've already built the largest coronavirus testing capacity in Europe.

Up from 2,000 tests a day in March, to our current capacity of more than half a million. But we will not rest, because testing capacity helps keep people safe and can help us get things back more like normal life.

Today I am delighted that we can announce two new mega labs, which will open early in the new year. They will add another 600,000 capacity to our daily capacity, that doubles the current capacity. They will also create 4,000 jobs. Crucially, they will represent a permanent part of the UK's new diagnostics industry.

We didn't enter this crisis with a major diagnostics industry, and so together we have built one. Both to help beat the virus by testing more people and returning results more quickly and to give our country a permanent defence that we need for any future epidemic.

And to improve our care for so many other diseases, like heart disease or cancer or flu.

I am absolutely determined that we must have a massive diagnostics capacity, not just for this pandemic, but long into the future.

More capacity also speeds up turnaround times but speeding up turnaround times isn't just about the test, it is also about the logistics.

So I want to take one moment to thank the Royal Mail, who, from this weekend, will [empty some of their post boxes 7 days a week](#) to speed up home testing. It is a big team effort and I am very grateful for our posties for playing their part to help keep people safe.

This expansion of testing matters because it helps protect people. I just want to touch on some of the reasons why it matters.

It means we can test the most vulnerable, and those who care for the most vulnerable, and we can test them more frequently.

Over the last week, for instance we have delivered more than 3 million tests to NHS staff, to begin their regular bi-weekly testing.

And today I know so many people have been relieved to hear that we have started a pilot for testing visitors in care homes, to use tests to allow people to visit loved ones in care homes in a way that keeps them safe and bring back some of those magical moments of social contact.

Our expansion of testing also means we can roll out mass testing further.

We are making progress in the city wide testing across Liverpool and we are now rolling out this localised approach to other areas.

83 local authorities have now signed up to receive regular batches of these new lateral flow tests, which can allow for results in minutes.

This is an important step and it combines the local insight of the brilliant Directors of Public Health right across the country with our strong national

infrastructure of NHS Test and Trace combining to keep our communities safe.

## **Vaccines**

I also want to turn to vaccines. While we don't yet have a vaccine, we can now have hope.

You may have heard the two promising pieces of news from earlier today.

First, Janssen's Phase 3 clinical trials are beginning today in 17 sites across the country, including Southampton, Dundee, Cardiff and Belfast.

It's the third vaccine to enter clinical trials here and should the trials come good, and that is by no means certain, and it can be proved to be safe and effective. We have 30 million doses on order by the middle of next year.

Finally, you will no doubt have seen the excellent news that Moderna have today announced results from their preliminary trial data, suggesting that their vaccine has an effectiveness of 94.5 per cent. This is another encouraging step forward, although I stress that this is preliminary.

The safety data is limited and their production facilities are not yet at scale.

Should this latest vaccine be approved, the doses would be available from spring next year.

And I can announce that we have today secured an initial agreement for 5 million doses of the Moderna vaccine.

It is a similar RNA technology to Pfizer/BioNTech, of which we have already ordered 40 million doses, which should that be proved to work will come on stream potentially at the end of this year.

Across diagnostics and vaccines, great advances in medical science are coming to the rescue. And while there is much uncertainty, we can see the candle of hope.

And we must do all that we can to nurture its flame but we are not there yet.

Until the science can make us safe, we must remain vigilant and keep following the rules that we know can keep this virus under control.

Now I'd like to hand over to Dr. Hopkins to say more about our work on mass testing.

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# Royal Mail to collect COVID-19 test kits 7 days a week

Press release

Royal Mail is introducing a weekend extension for some priority postboxes from 21 November.



- Collections will now be made from over 15,000 priority postboxes on a Sunday
- Royal Mail has been a key partner for the government's national testing programme for the distribution of coronavirus (COVID-19) test kits since the start of the pandemic
- The majority of the tens of millions of home, regional test centre and care provider tests have moved through Royal Mail for some or all of their delivery and return journeys since April 2020

Royal Mail is introducing a weekend extension for over 15,000 existing priority postboxes from 21 November. Collections will now be made from these priority postboxes on a Sunday.

Royal Mail has also increased its number of priority postboxes available for Monday to Saturday postings from 33,000 to over 35,000, providing increased convenience for test kit customers.

Priority postboxes can be identified via the [Royal Mail website](#) or app.

Nick Landon, Chief Commercial Officer at Royal Mail, said:

Since April, we have played a crucial role in the movement of test kits. This includes delivery to and collection from the growing number of regional test centres and care providers and the return of home tests.

As part of this we introduced a unique network of priority postboxes for the rapid return of test kits to labs to help in the country's fight against the pandemic.

Royal Mail has always been proud to help the country in whatever way we can and we could not be prouder of the support we have been asked to give the government and the Department of Health and Social Care.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Matt Hancock, said:

I want to thank the Royal Mail, who, from this weekend, will empty some of their post boxes 7 days a week to speed up home testing.

It is a big team effort and I am very grateful for our posties for playing their part to help keep people safe.

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## [New Help to Buy scheme open for business](#)

The new [Help to Buy: Equity Loan \(2021-2023\)](#) scheme is now open for business.

Homes England has announced that first-time buyers interested in new-build homes can apply for the new Help to Buy: Equity Loan scheme from Wednesday 16 December 2020.

With a Help to Buy: Equity Loan, the government lends homebuyers up to 20% (40% in London) of the cost of a newly built home. Customers pay a deposit of 5% or more and arrange a mortgage of 25% or more to make up the rest. The equity loan is interest-free for the first five years.

Homebuilders are getting into contract for the new scheme and starting to market their new build homes. Eligible first-time buyers will be able to reserve their homes from mid-December and get the keys to move in from 1 April 2021.

Housing Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

The Government is providing more ways to help families onto the housing ladder, and provide that life-changing moment when you get the keys to your own home.

Alongside First Homes, Shared Ownership and our £12bn investment in affordable housing, our new Help to Buy scheme will help thousands



more families take their first step into a home of their own.

Will German, director of Help to Buy at Homes England, said:

Help to Buy has already helped more than 270,000 people into home ownership and 82% are first-time buyers. The new Help to Buy builds on this success with first-time buyers in front of mind.

We're pleased we can help homebuyers with smaller deposits to own a home, at a time where there are fewer options open to them. Housing, like most sectors, has experienced a slowdown during the Covid-crisis. But Help to Buy continues to give homebuilders the confidence to keep on building at a more crucial time than ever.

The new Help to Buy: Equity Loan (2021-2023) helps those who need it most, first-time buyers. Help to Buy will keep supporting first-time buyers so that more people are helped to make their first step on the housing ladder.

Help to Buy (2021-2023) has regional price limits, set at 1.5 times the average first-time buyer price in each region in England. This keeps the prices of new homes closer to the average regional first-time buyer property prices, reducing the amount that first-time buyers need to borrow.

Homebuilders selling Help to Buy homes under the new scheme must comply with more stringent conditions that aim to drive quality and consistent building standards. Help to Buy homebuilders must agree to follow Consumer Code for homebuilders, the New Homes Ombudsman, the Building Safety Charter and fulfil planning permissions and building regulations. They must also display their Home Builders Federation (HBF) star ratings when they advertise homes and give homebuyers a new home warranty before they complete their purchase.

Homebuyers interested in Help to Buy: Equity Loan (2021-2023) are encouraged to read the recently published [homebuyers guide](#) to know how the scheme works and how to apply.

**ENDS**

**Notes to Editors:**

- Over 270,000 properties were bought with the Help to Buy: Equity Loan scheme from 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2020. First-time buyers accounted for 82% per cent of total purchases.
- A quarter of first-time buyers who have bought with the scheme are from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, compared to less than a fifth of all first-time buyers nationally.
- Two-third (63%) of the first-time buyers were aged 34 and under.
- As well as reserving their property, homebuyers need to apply for their equity loan but they will not be able to legally complete their purchase until 1 April 2021 onwards.
- In England, the mean equity loan was £58,128 for first-time buyers and each of these mean equity loans were around 20% of the value of the corresponding mean purchase price. Most completions in the scheme used the full 20% equity

loan available to them.

### **Help to Buy: Equity Loan (2021-2023), England.**

First-time homebuyers who meet affordability and lending terms can borrow an equity loan of up to 20% (40% in London) of the sale price of a new build home. How much you can spend on your home will depend on which region it is in. North East £186,100; North West 224,400; Yorkshire and the Humber £228,100; East Midlands £261,900; West Midlands £255,600; East of England £407,400; London £600,000; South East £437,600; South West £349,000. You must fund at least 80% (60% in London) of the sale price with a mortgage and at least a 5% deposit.

Pay no interest on the loan for the first 5 years. Interest fees start at 1.75% and rise each year in April by the Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) plus 2%. You pay a monthly management fee of £1 for the life of the loan. Homes England, the lender, secures the equity loan as a second charge on your Help to Buy home. You must repay the equity loan when you sell the home, pay off your mortgage or reach the end of your loan term. But, you can repay all or part (10% at a time, or if you have a 40% loan, 20% or 30%) of the loan any time before then.

An independent financial adviser and a solicitor may be able to help you decide if Help to Buy is right for you.

Your home may be repossessed if you do not keep up repayments on your mortgage, equity loan or other loans secured against it.

[www.helptobuy.gov.uk/equity-loan](http://www.helptobuy.gov.uk/equity-loan)

For further information, please contact the Help to Buy media team at [media\\_helptobuy@homesengland.gov.uk](mailto:media_helptobuy@homesengland.gov.uk)

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## **United Kingdom and Canada announce recipient of first Media Freedom Award**

The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Dominic Raab, the United Kingdom's First Secretary of State and Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, today announced the winner of the first Canada-United Kingdom Media Freedom Award to recognize the journalists, individuals and organizations that actively promote and protect media freedom.

This year's winner, the Belarusian Association of Journalists, was singled out for its ongoing commitment to journalistic ethics and principles and its perseverance and self-sacrifice in the face of increased targeted crackdowns

on media in Belarus.

The announcement was made jointly during this year's Global Conference for Media Freedom, held virtually today, November 16 2020, and hosted by Canada and Botswana. The conference builds on the success of its inaugural session, held in London, United Kingdom, in 2019.

Attendees discussed the impacts of COVID-19 on media freedom, the increasing damage of disinformation to public trust in journalism and the prevalence of physical threats to journalists.

The establishment of the Media Freedom Award is one part of Canadian-UK efforts to drive international action on improving the safety of journalists around the world.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

It is vital that journalists, wherever they work in the world, can shine a light on what is going on, without fear of retaliation, censorship or punishment. I pay tribute to the Belarusian Association of Journalists for their dedication to reporting human rights and electoral fraud in the face of violence, threats and intimidation. The work of those who defend media freedoms has never been more important.

François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Foreign Affairs said:

At a time when media freedom is increasingly under attack, we commend the Belarusian Association of Journalists as it fights to protect the rights and freedoms, lives and livelihoods of media professionals in that country. Its ongoing efforts to counter repression and disinformation ensure the voices of journalists and citizens are heard, and matter, when it counts the most.

Andrei Bastunets, Chairperson of the Belarusian Association of Journalists said:

It is a great honour for the Belarusian Association of Journalists to receive this award. We regard this award as a high appraisal of the work of our colleagues, who every day honestly cover events in Belarus, risking their freedom and health. Today, journalists in Belarus have to work under gunfire, literally, in a peaceful country. They are victims of police violence and are sentenced to long-term arrests for their work. We thank every voice in the world that speaks out for Belarusian journalists today! This is very important for our colleagues who remain imprisoned.

## **Notes to Editors**

- The Belarusian Association of Journalists (BAJ) is the only independent journalists' union in the country.
- For the last 25 years, the BAJ has supported independent journalism in Belarus and has reached 1,300 members in Minsk.
- In 2003, the BAJ was awarded the Golden Pen of Freedom prize at the World Newspaper Congress and the World Editors Forum in Dublin, Ireland.
- In 2004, the European Parliament awarded the BAJ the Andrei Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought.
- The BAJ also received the Atlantic Council Freedom Award in 2011.

## **Associated links**