

Urgent Omicron appeal: Get boosted now

- Prime Minister and NHS turbocharge booster programme against Omicron and launch an urgent national appeal calling for people to get jabbed
- Latest data shows booster is needed to protect ourselves and the NHS against the variant
- Prime Minister: "A tidal wave of Omicron is coming. Get Boosted Now."
- UK Chief Medical Officers raise UK Covid Alert Level from Level 3 to Level 4
- All adults in England to be offered a booster jab by the end of the year. Devolved administrations also agree to accelerate vaccinations.

The Prime Minister, together with the NHS, has today [Sunday 12 December] launched an urgent national appeal calling for people to get jabbed, as he outlined plans to significantly increase NHS vaccination capacity.

It comes as the UK Chief Medical Officers have today increased the UK Covid Alert Level from Level 3 to Level 4 due to a rapid increase in cases of the Omicron variant.

The latest data suggests Omicron is extremely transmissible and will become the dominant variant by mid-December. Cases are now doubling every 2 to 3 days.

Data published on Friday suggests that vaccine efficacy against symptomatic infection is substantially reduced against Omicron with just two doses, but a third dose boosts protection back up to over 70%.

It is too early to draw firm conclusions about whether the Omicron variant is as virulent as Delta but even if it is more mild, a slight fall in vaccine efficacy can lead to a substantial increase in hospitalisations. Hospitalisations in South Africa have doubled in a week and are expected to rise in the UK over the next 2 weeks.

The extent of transmissibility, coupled with reduced protection after two doses and the raising of the alert level by the UK CMOs, means the Prime Minister and NHS England are today launching an urgent national Omicron appeal for the public to Get Boosted Now.

The government and NHS will rise to the challenge, working flat out to deliver jabs, save lives and ensure the NHS is not overwhelmed this winter with an influx of Omicron cases.

The vaccination programme is already delivering hundreds of thousands of boosters every day, with over 530,000 jabs in arms on Saturday alone, while catching up on elective surgeries and appointments and delivering all urgent care.

All adults will now be offered a booster jab by the New Year, bringing the target forward by one month.

Bookings through the [National Booking System](#) will be prioritised at most sites unless it is a pop up or walk-in only site. The National Booking System will now be stood up for over 18s and will take a short time to operationalise. From tomorrow adults over 30 will be able to book online, and all over 18s from Wednesday.

Some walk-in appointments will be available from tomorrow for over 18s, dependent on location. If there are long queues or all slots have been booked, people are encouraged to be patient and keep trying, or book online.

To deliver the ramped-up vaccination programme, NHS staff will need to be redeployed away from non-urgent services. This means that all primary care services will now focus on urgent clinical need and vaccines, and some non-urgent appointments and elective surgeries may be postponed until the New Year while every adult in the country is jabbed. Without the added protection from this third dose, NHS beds will quickly fill up and the long term damage to the economy and the NHS efforts to bring down the backlog will be even greater.

The NHS will be given everything it needs to get jabs in arms as the UK responds to the Omicron variant.

The Prime Minister has today set out that the NHS will be given everything it needs to boost jabbing capacity, which will include:

- New vaccination sites set up across the country, including mobile pop up sites
- Increasing opening times for vaccination sites, to 7 days a week with more appointments early in the morning, in the evening and at weekends
- 50 military planning experts will help coordinate the national effort by supporting the NHS with logistics of the rollout
- Reprioritising the NHS workforce to deliver as many jabs as possible
- A national call for thousands more NHS volunteers

If Omicron is left unchecked the NHS is at risk of being quickly overwhelmed. This week the Prime Minister confirmed the move to Plan B for England following its rapid spread.

Face coverings are now compulsory in most public indoor venues, people are asked to work from home if they can from tomorrow, and from Wednesday 15 December negative lateral flow tests will be needed to enter nightclubs and large events, except for those who are double vaccinated and subject to approval from Parliament.

Every adult in the country is now being urged to book their jab as soon as possible. The vaccination programme is open to everyone, and first and second doses remain available.

The government will continue to work closely with the devolved administrations on the booster rollout, and there will be Barnett consequential for any new funding.