

Vaccination programme accelerated as Step 4 is paused

- Step 4 of the Roadmap paused for four weeks while vaccination programme is accelerated following significant rise in more transmissible variant
- Second dose brought forward to 8 weeks for over 40s to provide strongest protection against Delta variant sooner
- Restrictions to be lifted on weddings and wakes on 21 June

Step 4 will be delayed by up to four weeks and the vaccination programme accelerated to respond to the rapid spread of the Delta variant, the Prime Minister has confirmed.

By 19 July, all adults will have been offered a first dose and around two thirds of all adults will have been offered two doses of the vaccine.

Data suggests that the Delta variant is between 40% and 80% more transmissible than the Alpha variant and is rapidly driving up case numbers.

There are currently around 8,000 cases a day, the highest since the end of February, and these are increasing by around 64% each week.

Hospitalisations are starting to rise, with the average number of people admitted to hospital increasing in England by 50% per week, and 61% per week in the North-West.

Our successful vaccination programme is weakening the link between cases and hospitalisations, but the latest evidence shows that two doses are needed to provide effective protection against the Delta variant.

The Roadmap has always been led by data and not dates, and the government's four tests have not been met. In order to offer two vaccine doses to more people, prevent thousands of unnecessary deaths and protect the NHS, Step 4 will be delayed by up to four weeks to Monday 19 July. If the data rapidly improves this could be brought forward to 5 July.

The four tests are:

- The vaccine deployment programme continues successfully
- Evidence shows vaccines are sufficiently effective in reducing hospitalisations and deaths in those vaccinated
- Infection rates do not risk a surge in hospitalisations which would put unsustainable pressure on the NHS
- Our assessment of the risks is not fundamentally changed by new Variants of Concern

Two vaccine doses have now been shown to be highly effective in reducing hospitalisation from the Delta variant, with the latest PHE data suggesting this could be up to 96% for Pfizer-BioNTech and 92% for the Oxford-

AstraZeneca vaccine.

All adults aged 18 and over will now be offered a first dose by 19 July, 2 weeks earlier than planned. All adults aged 23 and 24 will be able to book their first dose from tomorrow (15 June).

By 19 July, all those aged over 50 and the clinically extremely vulnerable will have been offered their second dose, and those second doses will have taken effect.

Second doses for all over 40s will be accelerated by reducing the dosing interval from 12 weeks to 8 weeks. All over 40s who received a first dose by mid-May will be offered a second dose by 19 July.

The school holidays will also begin at the end of July, further reducing transmission among the younger age groups. Step 3 restrictions will continue in their current format with the following exceptions implemented from 21 June. No restrictions will be reimposed.

The 30-person limit will be lifted for weddings and wakes. There will be no set limit on the number of attendees, but venues must adhere to covid secure guidance, maintain social distancing and provide table service. All weddings in private settings, such as gardens, must have completed a covid risk assessment to ascertain how many guests they can host safely.

Event pilots will continue, including some Euro 2020 matches, Wimbledon, and some arts and music performances. Attendees will show proof of vaccination or a recent negative test.

Care home residents will no longer need to isolate if they leave their residence. Exceptions will include high risk visits including overnight stays in hospital.

Cases are expected to continue rising due to the transmissibility of the Delta variant, but with the acceleration of the vaccination programme hospitalisations are expected to stabilise.

Additional support is available for areas with high cases rates of the Delta variant, including surge testing, isolation support, and efforts to maximise vaccination uptake.