

# Home Secretary's statement on coronavirus: 21 January 2021

Good afternoon.

I am joined today by Dr Vin Diwakar, NHS England Regional Medical Director for London, and Martin Hewitt, Chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council.

The rollout of our fantastic vaccination programme continues to make good progress.

The brilliant NHS is vaccinating people at the rate of 200 jabs per minute.

And as of today, four million, nine hundred and seventy-three thousand, two hundred and forty-eight people have been vaccinated across the United Kingdom.

The NHS are working as quickly, efficiently and as fairly as possible to get the vaccine to priority groups.

And I want to take this moment and opportunity to counter some of the disinformation about the vaccine – especially any messages targeted towards those from an ethnic minority background.

This vaccine is safe for us all.

It will protect you and your family.

It is our best chance of beating this virus.

So I urge everyone across our wonderfully diverse country to get the vaccine when their turn comes to keep us all safe.

But we are sadly not out of the woods yet, this virus remains severe and it is a deadly threat.

Our NHS is under immense pressure and large numbers of people are still falling ill and, sadly, dying.

So it is absolutely crucial that you stay at home to protect the NHS and save lives.

Since yesterday, thirty-seven thousand eight hundred and ninety-two people have tested positive for coronavirus.

As of 19 January, thirty-eight thousand, six hundred and seventy-six people were in hospital with coronavirus. That is up 4.8 per cent from the week before.

Of those who have tested positive for coronavirus, across all settings, sadly ninety-four thousand, five-hundred and eighty people have died. That's one

thousand, two-hundred and ninety fatalities since yesterday.

Every death is a tragedy and these numbers demonstrate, that this country remains in the grip of a pandemic.

My thoughts go to all of those who have lost loved ones.

The sacrifices that millions of you are making day in, day out are starting to make a difference.

By staying at home, you are helping to keep those you care about safe, and contributing to this national effort.

But there is still a small minority who refuse to do the right thing.

To them, my message is clear: if you do not follow these rules, then the police will enforce them.

Police officers are now moving more quickly to handing out fines when they encounter breaches. And they have my absolute backing in doing so.

As we have done throughout this pandemic, we are constantly reviewing our approach to ensure that we can crack down on the most serious cases of rule-breaking.

And today I can announce that next week we will be introducing a new £800 fine for those attending house parties, which will double for each repeat offence to a maximum level of £6,400.

These fines will apply to those who attend illegal gatherings of more than 15 people in homes.

The science is clear: such irresponsible behaviour poses a significant threat to public – not only to those in attendance, but also to the wonderful police officers who attend to shut down these events.

From the outset, we have given the police the necessary powers to enforce the rules, which are in place to stop the spread of the virus.

As this latest measure demonstrates, we will not stand by while a small number of individuals put others at risk.

I want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to our police forces and our fire services for their extraordinary contribution throughout the pandemic.

They are out there each and every day, supporting our communities, risking their own health to keep the rest of us safe.

And we have seen in their own commitment during this whole response to the flooding caused by Storm Christoph.

During such a difficult time for this country, the commitment and courage shown by our emergency services has been truly inspiring.

Everyone has a role to play in our fight against this virus.

So please: stay at home so we can protect the NHS and save lives.

I will now hand over to Martin Hewitt, Chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council.