

Business Secretary urges Surrey residents to come forward for vaccine after virtual visit

Press release

Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng has paid tribute to clinicians and volunteers during a virtual visit to a vaccination hub in Surrey, after which he urged anyone who is eligible to come forward for their jabs.



Speaking to local NHS leads at The Hythe Centre in Egham, the Secretary of State heard how the vaccine rollout has been going in Surrey, as well as from volunteers at the centre who have been tirelessly supporting the vaccination effort.

After his visit, the Business Secretary said:

I am bowled over by the hard work and dedication of those I spoke to at the Hythe Centre today. It is thanks to their efforts that our vaccination programme has been going at such pace and that so many people have come forward for their vaccines.

To those who have been invited but haven't yet come forward, please do so as soon as you can. Each vaccine given is another step closer to normality for the whole country, and there are incredibly dedicated teams across Surrey waiting to help.

Since the vaccination effort began more than 50,000 people have received a jab in North West Surrey across four different sites, including The Hythe Centre, as well as 55 care homes.

200 staff and 370 volunteers have contributed to the effort, taking part in a range of activities from developing a video about what people can expect when they come for their vaccine to helping with more practical issues such as sourcing microwaves and fridges.

Dr Caroline Baker, CEO of NICS, the GP federation leading the roll out of vaccinations in the area, said:

Our teams have been working tirelessly and we're so proud to have offered the vaccine to nearly all our over 70-year-old and shielding patients.

The community spirit here has been phenomenal. From our dedicated clinical teams and support staff, to our army of volunteers and enthusiastic local council and voluntary sector colleagues – everyone has played a part in making the local programme a huge success.

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[New vaccine uptake plan published](#)

- Ministers and NHS launch plan to help boost vaccine uptake in all communities
- Plan based on local initiatives already in place that are successfully boosting uptake
- Plan sets out best practice and will help vaccinators and local leaders to engage with communities
- Comes ahead of 15 February target date to give all top 4 priority groups their first jabs

Published today (Saturday 13 February), the [COVID-19 vaccination uptake plan](#) sets out how the government and NHS England are partnering with directors of public health, charities and the faith sector to increase vaccine take up and ensure equal access.

Evidence from the roll-out so far has shown the vital role of health and social care staff and community leaders who are providing advice and information to their local communities.

Data published today shows comparable vaccine programmes achieved a 75% uptake rate, but so far, the COVID-19 vaccination programme has exceeded expectations, seeing 93% uptake in those over 75 years of age. Our aim remains to achieve the highest possible uptake in all other groups.

Vaccine Deployment Minister Nadhim Zahawi said:

We have seen an incredible response so far from the public to the vaccination programme and are on track to offer everyone in the top

priority groups a jab by 15 February.

We recognise that some groups feel more hesitant about getting a jab, or have more barriers, both physical and mental, preventing them from accessing one when it's offered.

Each shot in the arm brings us closer to beating this terrible virus. That's why we are setting out our plan to make sure everyone is protected equally, by working hand in hand with those who know their communities best to make sure as many people as possible take up the offer of a lifesaving vaccination.

The plan highlights work being done at a local and national level to make sure specific groups, including those with mental illness or without a fixed address, can access the information and advice they need to make a decision on taking up the vaccination.

Building on work already underway to reach more hesitant audiences, which includes translating vaccine resources in over 13 languages, the plan aims to raise awareness of how the NHS is making vaccination accessible to all, especially ethnic minorities, homeless people, asylum seekers and those with disabilities.

Community leaders are being urged to make clear that an NHS number is not needed to get a jab and that there are a large number of vaccination sites spread right across the country that people can go to. Over 98% of the UK population now lives within 10 miles of a vaccination site.

The uptake plan sets out best-in-class real-world examples of community-led engagement to improve vaccine uptake that other local areas could replicate to drive uptake in their areas. This includes:

- the GP Federation Alliance for Better Care have launched a mobile vaccination service in Crawley, staffed by members of the community, to reach those who are housebound or less physically mobile
- the OneSlough Partnership has trained vaccine community champions and produced social media resources to dispel vaccine myths and boost vaccine uptake within their communities
- Bradford Council and the Race Equality Network have built on established groups and events such virtual women's exercise classes and befriender services as a forum to ask questions and share information about vaccination
- NHS England and NHS Improvement have produced short films to provide accessible information for people with a learning disability including autism, about what a vaccine is, how it's made and how to decide whether to get vaccinated
- a branch manager at MiHomeCare, a domiciliary care provider in North London, noticed her staff were initially hesitant to take the vaccine, so she shared a video of herself getting a vaccine on her workplace social media and WhatsApp group. This led to a noticeable increase in staff vaccine uptake

Local initiatives are also being bolstered by national support programmes. The Community Champions scheme that recently received a £23 million boost is helping 60 local councils to fund local engagement with groups including older people, those with disabilities and people from ethnic minority backgrounds.

NHS England and PHE have been working with Rethink Mental Illness to produce communications materials which aim to overcome barriers and address common causes of concern faced by people living with severe mental illnesses or learning disabilities and autism.

A new Vaccination Equalities Committee, led by NHS England and NHS Improvement, is bringing also together government departments with national representatives from the Association of Directors of Public Health, local authorities, Fire and Police services and third sector organisations to advise and guide the vaccine deployment programme on addressing inequalities.

The plan published today builds on the [UK COVID-19 vaccines delivery plan](#), published on 11 January, which provided details about vaccine investment and supply, as well as the operation of vaccination sites across the country.

Equalities Minister Kemi Badenoch said:

COVID-19 affects everyone, whatever their background. Life-saving vaccines need the trust and confidence of every community to protect us all from the virus. That is why the government is working with local figures, faith leaders, and doctors to combat misinformation and encourage everyone to get vaccinated.

Two months since the start of the vaccination roll-out, over 13 million people across the UK have already taken up the offer of a vaccine. Jabs are now being administered at 267 hospitals, 1,034 local vaccination sites, 90 vaccination centres and 194 community pharmacies. The NHS is on track to offer a first dose to the top 4 priority groups by 15 February – care home residents and staff, frontline health and social care workers, all those aged 70 or over and the clinically extremely vulnerable.

NHS top trauma surgeon and volunteer vaccinator Dr Martin Griffiths said:

Thanks to the fantastic efforts of hard-working NHS staff and volunteers, the largest vaccination programme in the health service's history has now jabbed four in five people aged 70 and over – but it's not too late to come forward.

Black, Asian and minority ethnic people are disproportionately affected by COVID so it's really important they get the vaccine. I've had it myself but understand that each person has their own specific reasons why they are hesitant and I want to ensure every person I see understands the vaccine is safe and effective as this will help us all get back to as normal a life as possible.

- [ONS coronavirus \(COVID-19\) latest insights](#)
 - the [COVID-19 vaccine uptake plan is published on GOV.UK](#), and includes full details of all case studies
 - [latest NHS data on COVID-19 vaccinations](#)
 - of the 10,523,774 first doses administered up to 7 February, 8,161,314 (78%) were white British or white Irish, and 875,344 (8.3%) were from ethnic minority backgrounds, including 4.7% Asian (excluding Chinese) and 1.6% black
 - to arrange interviews with the case studies, please [contact the DHSC press office](#)
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[Environment Secretary tours Cornish mass vaccination centre](#)

Environment Secretary George Eustice has experienced first-hand the outstanding work undertaken at one of Cornwall's vaccination centres during a virtual visit to the centre at Stithians showground.

The Secretary of State took a virtual tour of the vaccination hub yesterday (Friday 12th February) as the Government remains on track to offer a vaccine to everyone in the UK in the first four priority groups by 15 February.

Mr Eustice met chief pharmacist Iain Davidson who briefed him on Cornwall's vaccine roll out. He was also joined by Cornwall-based celebrity chef Rick Stein, who recently got the jab himself, to thank the NHS heroes spearheading this cross-country effort.

As of 11th February, first doses have been delivered in to 127,802 arms in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, with locals Geoff Penhaligon and Rosemary Southwood also joining the tour – after both receiving their own jabs as part of the ongoing vaccine roll out.

Over 13 million people have now received their first vaccine dose, and through our world-leading vaccines delivery plan we remain on track to offer a first dose to everyone in the first four priority groups by Monday (15th February).

All those eligible for a vaccination are urged to take them up to make sure that they are able to get the protection they need as we continue to fight this disease together.

Environment Secretary George Eustice said:

The vaccination site at Stithians Showground is playing a vital part in the rollout of the vaccine across Cornwall. It was a

pleasure to virtually meet some of the local NHS staff and volunteers who have been working so hard to get the vaccine to priority groups across from across the county.

Our priority is to protect the NHS and save lives, and I would urge anyone who is eligible for a jab to book an appointment and join the national effort to help us halt the spread of this virus.

Cornish local and celebrity chef Rick Stein said:

I can report a completely positive experience having my COVID-19 vaccination last week, made all the more memorable because half a dozen of my closest friends of the same age as me were there at the same time, the first social experience I've had for weeks.

I think the NHS have been amazing throughout this awful pandemic.

Iain Davidson, chief pharmacist for Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust, said:

Vaccinating people is our way out of this pandemic, and we're making great strides in our vaccination programme to protect the most vulnerable people in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly against COVID-19.

Everyone across health and care is committed to the rollout programme and is working very hard to offer the vaccines to the most vulnerable by the middle of February, and I would like to thank them for their tireless support. Up until 4 February, our incredible team of GPs, practice nurses, pharmacists and clinicians have vaccinated more than 103,000 people – including our frontline health and social care staff.

I would encourage anyone who's aged 70 and older, extremely clinically vulnerable, or one of our frontline health and care staff who isn't yet booked in for a Covid vaccination to call 119 or visit nhs.uk to book their appointment – don't wait for your letter, just pick up the phone, or book online now.

People aged 70 and over in England should contact the NHS to arrange their jab through the [online national booking service](https://nhs.uk). If they cannot get online, they can also call 119 or contact their local GP practice.

Support for small businesses, landlords and leaseholders: government charges up the electric vehicle revolution with £50 million boost

- electric vehicle charging schemes to be opened to small business, leaseholders and those in rented accommodation to accelerate electric vehicle (EV) uptake
- worth up to £50 million, the updated schemes will also boost rural areas and the charity sector, ensuring those who need it the most can access a chargepoint
- investment comes as the government pledges to make it simpler and more reliable to use public chargepoints, levelling up the UK's EV infrastructure network

Small businesses and those in leasehold and rented accommodation are set to benefit from up to £50 million to install electric vehicle chargepoints.

The Department for Transport (DfT) has today (13 February 2021) announced that the [Electric Vehicle Homecharge Scheme \(EVHS\)](#), which provides up to £350 towards a chargepoint, will continue next year and be expanded to target people in rented and leasehold accommodation.

At the same time, the [Workplace Charging Scheme \(WCS\)](#) will be opened up to small to medium enterprises (SMEs) and the charity sector, providing a boost as staff return to work. The changes will also mean that small accommodation businesses, such as B&Bs can benefit from the funding, boosting rural areas, and tackling the 'range anxiety' associated with long journeys.

This investment comes as the department launches a [consultation on improving the charging experience](#) – simplifying payments and increasing reliability – taking us a step closer to delivering on the commitment to end the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030.

Transport Minister Rachel Maclean said:

Whether you're on the school run or travelling to work, or don't have access to a private parking space, today's announcement will bring us one step closer to building and operating a public chargepoint network that is affordable, reliable and accessible for all drivers.

As the UK accelerates towards net-zero emissions by 2050, we are determined to deliver a world-leading electric vehicle charging network, as we build back greener and support economic growth across the country.

Today's consultation suggests simplifying payment at chargepoints, meaning electric vehicle drivers can use contactless payment but do not have to download an app. It also seeks to make chargepoints more reliable and to force operators to provide a 24/7 call helpline for drivers.

Drivers should also be able to find and access chargepoints easily, which is why we're proposing that operators should make location data, power rating and price information more accessible for drivers. This is essential for ensuring costs are fair, for driving competition, and for increasing the confidence of both existing electric vehicle drivers and those considering making the switch.

These proposals will ensure that it's as easy – or even easier – for drivers to charge their car as it is to refuel a petrol or diesel vehicle.

The investment announced today, follows £20 million in funding announced last week for councils to improve the on-street charging infrastructure in their local areas, and is part of a suite of measures the government is taking to accelerate electric vehicle uptake and decarbonise transport.

CEO of Co Charger, Joel Teague, said:

From a Co Charger point of view, this announcement is particularly welcome because it will put more chargepoints into homes and businesses where they can be shared with their neighbourhoods. Dependable, affordable charging while at home or work is essential for people to make the switch to electric motoring, and by sharing these newly funded chargepoints communities will be able to meet that need.

Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) National Chair, Mike Cherry, said:

It's great to see the Department for Transport putting businesses front and centre as part of the UK's mission to achieve net-zero by 2050.

Small businesses want to play a critical role in helping the UK reach its green targets, and electric vehicles are the future. That's why this is important news for the nation, particularly rural areas which are often left behind.

[Foreign Secretary thanks medics on](#)

vaccine frontline

Foreign Secretary and First Secretary of State Dominic Raab thanked the dedicated medical teams delivering coronavirus jabs to the country's most vulnerable people during a visit today to a shopping centre converted into a vaccine hub.

His visit to The Heart centre in Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, came as the UK is on track to reach the target of offering a first dose to the top four priority groups by Monday (February 15).

Mr Raab saw local residents in the 70+ age group and clinically vulnerable people who were getting their jabs.

More than 10,000 people have been vaccinated at The Heart centre since it was launched on 14 January this year. A former clothes shop has been converted to meet the challenge of the mass roll-out, and hundreds of local residents are receiving jabs there every day.

Foreign Secretary and First Secretary of State Dominic Raab said:

It's thanks to the hard work of everyone involved, including the dedicated team at this hub, that we've delivered the first dose to millions of our most vulnerable citizens.

If you are eligible for the vaccine, I would urge you to get it as soon as possible, as this is our way out of the devastating pandemic.

I'm proud that the UK is leading efforts for global access to COVID vaccines and treatments to protect more people and help end the pandemic sooner.

Dr Caroline Baker, CEO of North West Surrey Integrated Care Services, the GP federation leading the roll out of vaccinations in the area, said:

Our teams have been working tirelessly and we're so proud to have offered the vaccine to nearly all our over 70-year-old and shielding patients.

The community spirit here has been phenomenal. From our dedicated clinical teams and support staff, to our army of volunteers and enthusiastic local council and voluntary sector colleagues – everyone has played a part in making the local programme a huge success.

Monika Wells, from Long Ditton, is a volunteer at the Walton service, helping to guide patients through the process. She said:

I wanted to support this huge effort to get the country back on its feet. The dedication of the team here is just amazing. It's like a vaccination tsunami – the pace is incredible and we're just getting it done.

It's a really rewarding role – everyone is so appreciative and often quite emotional as they've not been out of the house for over a year. This is the glimmer of hope we've all wanted.

All those who live in England, who are aged 70 and over and haven't yet had an appointment, should contact the NHS to arrange their vaccine.

It is also essential that everyone continues to stay at home if possible, whether they have had their jab or not, to protect the NHS and save lives.

Further information:

- The UK has been leading global efforts to ensure that developing countries receive doses. It is one of the largest donors to Gavi's COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC), committing £548 million in UK aid to help distribute 1.3 billion doses of coronavirus vaccines to 92 developing countries this year.
- The UK has also helped to raise \$1bn for the COVAX AMC from other international donors.
- Through the UK vaccines delivery plan, we will offer a first vaccine to everyone in the first four priority groups by February 15th.
- The top four groups are recommended by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation and are care home residents and staff, those aged over 80, frontline health and social care staff, those aged over 70, and the clinically extremely vulnerable.