

Health and Social Care Secretary's statement on coronavirus (COVID-19): 25 January 2021

Good afternoon and welcome back to Downing Street for today's coronavirus briefing. I'm joined by our Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Dr Jenny Harries and Dr Susan Hopkins, who is the Chief Medical Advisor to Public Health England and NHS Test and Trace.

I want to update you on the latest coronavirus data – and the vaccine rollout. In the last week in the UK, we have seen 37,258 cases of coronavirus, on average each day. The NHS is still under intense pressure across all parts of the country with 37,899 people in UK hospitals with COVID-19 – and that includes 4,076 on ventilators.

Sadly, today 592 more deaths were reported. We must never forget the real impact of this disease. The loved ones that we've lost. Grandparents. Parents. Friends. Colleagues. We grieve for each one. And the pressure on the front line, I can tell you, is just so relentless. And when I talk to my colleagues who are working in COVID wards.

They are flat out and they are stretched to the limit. They're doing everything they can. And I want to say a huge thank you to all those colleagues who are working so hard – they are pulling a huge shift and it's a duty on all of us to support them.

I want to extend that thanks also to our ambulance service workers and in particular I want to thank ambulance service staff who stepped up over the weekend when an appeal went out from the Scottish Ambulance Service for extra help and ambulance services from the other nations stepped forward.

Our health systems across the UK routinely work closely together – offering support when its needed. From vaccines to ambulance services, and the UK is stronger together in the fight against this pandemic.

I know how tough that fight is. Thankfully, there are early signs that the actions we're taking are working. The rise in the number of cases is slowing – and falling in some parts of the country like London and Scotland. At the same time, the number of vaccinations is going up.

Like many of you, I've been talking to members of my family who've just had the call to be vaccinated. It's a really emotional moment when people get vaccinated. It means so much to people because the vaccine brings safety to that individual and marks the route out for us all from this pandemic.

I'm so proud to be able to tell you that we have, as of last night, vaccinated 78.7% of all over 80s. That's almost 4 in 5 of everyone aged over 80. I'm delighted – you can see from these figures – there's so much

enthusiasm for vaccination amongst the over 80s because octogenarians know what the scientists know: which is that the vaccines save lives.

Of course, the rate limiting factor to this vaccination programme remains supply. As we know, supply is tight. We've had a very strong performance in this past week. And I'm confident that the NHS will deliver every shot that's made available to it. To help with that, today we opened a further 32 large-scale vaccination centres including at Blackpool Winter Gardens, the Black Country Living Museum – better known to many as the set of *Peaky Blinders* – and London's Francis Crick Institute – itself no stranger to human ingenuity.

And I'm determined to get vaccine uptake as high as possible. Today we're funding councils to enhance their vital efforts to engage those who are hardest to reach through our Community Champions scheme. As of today, 6.6 million have now received a vaccine against COVID-19. That's more than 1 in 9 of the adult population.

On Saturday alone, we gave nearly half a million jabs. In the last week, 2.5 million people have been vaccinated across the UK. That's a rate of more than 250 people a minute.

We're on track to offer everyone in the top 4 priority groups a jab by the 15 February. If you're in one of those groups, one of the top 4 priority groups, and you haven't had the call yet, don't worry: the NHS will be in touch.

It's a truly national effort. Alongside the GPs, pharmacists and other NHS staff and of course Armed Forces working so hard – alongside all of them working every weekend every evening. I particularly want to thank the 80,000 people who stepped forward to help deliver this, doing things like volunteering to stand in car parks for 8 hours a day – in the freezing cold to ensure elderly people can safely get into a vaccination centre.

It's truly heart-warming. We've seen this selfless attitude towards the vaccination programme and it makes me very proud and very grateful to all those who have stepped forward. Because we know the responsibility for our fightback against this disease rests with every one of us. That is equally true when it comes to following the rules and maintaining social distancing.

Social distancing works – by denying the virus the social contact it needs to spread. I want to reiterate an important point made by the Chief Medical Officers and the clinical advice that they have been giving: even if you've had the jab, the rules still apply.

There's 2 reasons for this. First, because the protection takes time. Your body's immune is only fully trained up around three weeks after your jab. And, even if you have protection yourself, we still don't know whether you will be able to pass coronavirus on to someone else.

We are monitoring this very carefully and will publish information on it as soon as we have it available. So this is not a moment to ease up.

The success of our vaccine rollout means we cannot – cannot – put our progress at risk.

The final thing I want to say is this. There's no question that the new variants have made this fight a whole lot tougher. And I want to set out again, precisely what we know about the new variants. As with all science – as we have throughout this unprecedented crisis – we are learning more all the time.

The new variant first discovered in Kent – which comprises now a significant number of our cases now – is spreading 30 to 70% more easily than the existing variant. Based on analysis conducted by academic colleagues in a variety of studies there is a realistic possibility that this variant may be associated with increased mortality compared to the old variant – as well as increased transmission.

Because of our extensive genomic sequencing, we have identified cases of the new variant first identified in South Africa and that one that was first identified in Brazil. Further scientific work is underway to understand more about these variants but in the meantime it reinforces the critical message that we must be cautious.

For all of us, our response must to be extra careful stay at home – maintain social distancing. We've all frankly sacrificed too much and its so important that we protect lives and we're making progress with the vaccine.

With the end in sight we cannot put that progress at risk. And there's a promise of better days that lie ahead we have to hold our nerve and persevere through this difficult winter. So it's incumbent on us all, wherever possible to stay at home, protect the NHS, and save lives.

37th Universal Periodic Review: UK statement on Rwanda



The United Kingdom welcomes Rwanda's strong record on economic and social rights, and promotion of gender equality. We remain concerned, however, by continued restrictions to civil and political rights and media freedom. As a member of the Commonwealth, and future Chair-in-Office, we urge Rwanda to model Commonwealth values of democracy, rule of law, and respect for human rights.

We recommend that Rwanda:

1. Conduct transparent, credible and independent investigations into allegations of extrajudicial killings, deaths in custody, enforced disappearances and torture, and bring perpetrators to justice.
2. Protect and enable journalists to work freely, without fear of retribution, and ensure that state authorities comply with the Access to Information law.
3. Screen, identify and provide support to trafficking victims, including those held in Government transit centres.

Thank you.

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Climate Adaptation Summit Talks: launching the Race to Resilience

Thank you very much distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, excellencies.

I would really like to thank the Netherlands for hosting this excellent summit. We have heard some brilliant submissions and real power to the messages that have been coming through. I also want to thank the Global Center on Adaptation – I see you have my friend Feike with you. And of course, Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, for his leadership in adaptation and resilience.

And I can tell you that as COP President this is a top priority indeed. And I know that it is the same for my dear friend Patricia Espinosa who you will hear from shortly as well.

Building resilience into our economies and societies is absolutely urgent, and it is essential, if we are to protect human lives and livelihoods from the effects of our changing climate.

Ultimately it requires all of us to act together: whether it's governments or cities, or regions; businesses, investors or civil society, all of us have to act on this issue.

Of course there is a great deal of fantastic work that is already going on.

From cities like Port Moresby, investing in trees and mangroves to protect the City and its people from coastal flooding.

To the Coalition for Climate Resilient Investment, which represents around \$10 trillion in assets.

Driving private finance to fund resilient infrastructure and helping investors to understand climate risk which is so vital.

And of course today, we are launching two new campaigns to focus efforts and make progress faster.

This morning, as you will have heard, Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced the Adaptation Action Coalition. With our partners, Egypt, Bangladesh, Malawi, St Lucia, the UN, and, of course the Netherlands.

The Coalition will bring governments together to accelerate action ahead of COP26.

And now it is my particular pleasure to launch the Race to Resilience campaign.

This is a campaign that will mobilise businesses, investors, cities, civil society and others to act.

Bringing together initiatives with the aim of building the resilience of 4 billion people across the world – that's representing over half of the world's population – by 2030.

The campaign will support activities delivering for people and nature.

For example, cities protecting people against heatwaves.

Or small holder farmers utilising climate resilient technologies.

And restoring deforested and degraded land.

I would also like to thank our two brilliant Climate Champions, Nigel and Gonzalo, for the incredible effort that they have put in to make sure that this initiative happens.

And I do think that together, these two campaigns can make a real difference to the scale and pace of adaptation and resilience across all our economies and indeed across society.

So I will finish with an ask to everyone who is listening and watching this: the ask to governments, is please join the Adaptation Action Coalition; and to businesses, to cities, to civil society groups, please join the Race to Resilience.

And help us, working together, to build a more resilient and better world.

Thank you.

LLWR donation brings festive cheer to families across West Cumbria

Needy families across West Cumbria enjoyed some Christmas cheer thanks to a significant donation from LLWR, who also ensured the scheme guaranteed small independent local retailers a timely boost.

The company gifted shopping vouchers to Copeland communities and ensured they could only be redeemed at local stores.

Jenny Brumby and Jenn Jakubowski, of Around the Combe Community Group, coordinated the assistance in the Millom area, where LLWR's funding helped supply families with Christmas Day lunches.

"It was absolutely amazing to have LLWR offer support at this time of great

need in the community,” said volunteer Jenny, also Copeland Borough Council’s Shop Local Coordinator.

“The need is huge and we’re very thankful. The support we’ve been able to give families has been life changing for some.”

Some £2,500 went to families in toy vouchers, to ensure youngsters had presents to open on Christmas morning, whilst 60 care parcels, including toiletries, were distributed, plus 30 baby parcels, including nappies.

In all, around 300 families in the Millom area have received help in part due to LLWR funding, with grants from other sources also playing a major part. Some funding has been held back by the Community Group, so they can continue to provide food parcels for those in most need.

The spark for LLWR’s campaign came from Egremont Town Council, who made a successful bid for funding to help support its aim to fund shopping vouchers for 105 struggling families that could only be redeemed in the town, thus also supporting local business.

Cath Giel, LLWR’s Director of Communications and Stakeholder Relations, opted to extend the scheme to also include the wider Copeland area, including Millom and Whitehaven.

She said: “We realised there was a great need right across the borough. Deprivation is an issue further exacerbated by Christmas, so we were happy to bring smiles to faces at what should be a joyous time of the year.

“Our donations also gave us the chance to support local businesses who have also been impacted by COVID, so this was a double win for our community.”

In addition, the West Cumbria Community Action Trust had identified 100 families who would struggle to fund the festivities, and each was gifted £50 in vouchers from LLWR to spend on meat, fruit and veg in local Whitehaven shops.

PM call with Julia Gillard: 25 January 2021

News story

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to Julia Gillard, Chair of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and former Australian Prime Minister.



The Prime Minister spoke to Julia Gillard, Chair of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and former Australian Prime Minister, this morning.

They agreed that ensuring girls everywhere get 12 years of quality education is one of the most important things we can do to help the world recover and build back better from Covid-19.

The UK will co-host a summit this summer with Kenya to drive fundraising and action on getting vulnerable children worldwide into education, and the Prime Minister reiterated the Government's commitment to supporting girls' education in particular through our G7 presidency and beyond.

He noted that the UK remains a world leader in international development and that girls' education is a priority for our aid budget. Ms Gillard welcomed the UK's strong record on funding GPE and they looked forward to working together in the run up to the GPE summit later this year.

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