

The first Covid-19 vaccine arrives in Scotland

The Scottish Government has announced that the first Covid-19 vaccine arrived in Scotland on Saturday.

Health Secretary, Jeane Freeman, welcomed the news. Ms Freeman said: "I am pleased to announce that the vaccine is now in Scotland and being stored safely in order for vaccinations to begin on Tuesday. Science has given us hope and we are starting on a journey which will eventually allow us to escape this terrible virus.

"Following clinical advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) we will begin with those groups which have been prioritised to address 99 per cent of preventable deaths associated with Covid-19. These include the elderly, care home residents and staff, and frontline health and social care workers.

"I ask everyone to be patient as we work through these groups as vaccine supply allows. I urge you to go for the vaccine when it's your turn, but continue to follow the rules as set out in FACTS. And we will eventually reach the end of this pandemic by working together."

When she addressed The Scottish Parliament on Thursday Ms Freeman explained some of the procedures for taking the vaccine out to as many people as possible. She said: "From next Tuesday, the 8th, we will begin vaccinating first the vaccinators themselves and then work our way through the first

cohorts of health and social care workers.

“When the first delivery is received in Scotland it will go straight to the 23 commercial freezers we have which can store the vaccine in the required temperature of -70c and are located across Scotland, including in our important island authorities.

“In the first week of vaccination, we will deliver to priority group individuals who can go to the vaccination storage areas and I’m delighted our local authority colleagues will work with us to ensure access to transport for staff who need it. Working in this way in the first week of a new vaccine will also allow our key pharmacy staff to be on hand as we run the process to make up the vials into doses and vaccinate, test out the data recording and clinical governance protocols and work through the pack down process for the following weeks.”

Edinburgh remains in Level Three of the government lockdown restrictions. These will be reviewed on Tuesday as they are each week. For the week from 26 November to 2 December 2020 the number of positive cases was 335 and the 7 day rate per 100,000 population was 63.8. This is an improvement on the previous week when the number of positive cases reported in the 7 days was 360 and the 7 day rate per 100,000 population was 68.6.

Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine

The UK Government explains that the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine is a lipid nanoparticle-formulated mRNA vaccine. The mRNA encodes the SARS-CoV-2 full length spike protein. The mRNA in the vaccine is translated and transcribed by the body to produce the spike protein. The protein then acts as an intracellular antigen to stimulate the immune response. The mRNA in the vaccine is normally degraded within a few days and cannot incorporate into the host genome. Data from the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine trials undertaken in over 40,000

individuals indicate high vaccine efficacy, with no serious safety concerns observed.

