

Coronavirus – Health Secretary announces the national Vaccine Deployment Plan

On Wednesday, the Health Secretary Jeane Freeman addressed parliament on the rollout of the vaccination programme in Scotland, and this evening the deployment plan was published.

You can read the document in full below. This plan will be updated as the vaccination programme is rolled out.

This is the largest mass vaccination programme ever conducted in Scotland, and is a logistical matter involving many branches of government and the NHS boards in Scotland.

Ms Freeman prefaced her statement by explaining that the latest 7 day rate of Covid-19 cases is now 262 per 100,000 with a test positivity rate of 10.1%.

The Health Secretary confirmed that the new variant is increasing its dominance in the new cases reported each day, and that 'we face a more perilous situation than at any point in this pandemic'. As at Wednesday morning, 191,965 people have had their first dose of the vaccine in Scotland and 2,990 have had a second dose.

The plan to roll out the vaccine is now well under way. It

began in December when the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine became available, and now with access to the more easily transported Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine, the Health Secretary estimates that by the end of February around 400,000 people a week will be vaccinated.

From 8 December to 12 January over 80% of care home residents and 55% of care home staff, just under 52% of frontline NHS and social care staff have been vaccinated. Just over 2% of those aged 80 and over living in the community have been vaccinated since 4 January. By the first week in February all of these groups are expected to be fully vaccinated with the first dose.

JCVI guidance

It is the Joint Committee on Vaccine and Immunisation (JCVI) which advises government on the priority given to certain groups based broadly on age. The virus is known to be more deadly to older people, or those with an underlying health condition.

Priority groups 1 and 2 include residents in care homes for older adults, care home staff, frontline health and social care staff and those aged over 80 who live in the community.

We were told today that it is hoped to have vaccinated those over 50 who are in Priority Group 9 by May.

Supplies

Today the government has 562,125 doses of the vaccine. 365,000 are in Scotland and a further 155,025 are in transit or in storage awaiting ordering and delivery.

With the vaccine stock which the government has, and which they project will be delivered over the next few weeks, the Health Secretary estimated that by mid February, all those

over 70 will be vaccinated. She also confirmed that by the beginning of March those who are over 65 and those who are clinically extremely vulnerable will have received the vaccine. That covers the JCVI priority groups 1 to 5 and amounts to 1.4 million people. The second dose will begin at the end of February as it has to be given 12 weeks after the first dose. This guidance changed recently.

We were advised of the complicated technicalities of ordering and delivery during a government briefing today, and were clearly told that there is no question of the government either hoarding or stockpiling vaccines. Vaccine is delivered to a central point in England and then ordered by health boards and distributed to them in accordance with a set procedure.

Vaccinators

Many people have come forward to volunteer their services as vaccinators. The Health Secretary confirmed that the government has just under 5,500 individual vaccinators registered not including participating GPs. Over 4,000 have undergone training for the Pfizer vaccine and 4,700 have been trained in using the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine. The government is also planning on recruiting people such as pharmacists, dentists and optometrists to act in this capacity too.

Mass vaccination centres

At this point GPs are administering the vaccine as well as hospitals and care homes. When the wider population is involved in the programme it is hoped that they will be able to access mass vaccination centres open from 8am to 8pm, community pharmacies, mobile vaccination clinics. With all of these resources the government estimates that around 20,000 vaccinations can be administered from a single location.

Queen Margaret University in East Lothian and the EICC in Morrison Street have both been identified as possible large vaccination centres. It is key that there is plenty of space for patients to enter, go through the administrative procedures which will be necessary before being vaccinated. Then there is also a need for any patients to be observed for around 15 minutes after getting the vaccine to make sure that there is no adverse reaction before allowing them to leave. It is for that reason important that there are doctors among the staff at these centres.

But we understand that it is not entirely necessary to exhaust all of the priority groups before opening a mass vaccination centre. These will be rolled out just as soon as possible, dependent on vaccine supply and the readiness of the locations.

The Cabinet Secretary is keen to have a range of options which meet the needs of individuals. In some cases there are very fit octogenarians who would be able to use a walk in centre, and in others they might be better served by attending their own GP.

For some groups within the community it will perhaps be more fitting and more accessible for them to attend a community pharmacy, but the essential in the government's view is to meet people's needs.

The setting up of a mass vaccination clinic will of course be driven more by the delivery of the supply of the vaccine, and it will be key to ensure the delivery of sufficient supply.

The Deputy Chief Medical Officer told The Edinburgh Reporter: "Our ideal is for people to have a choice. At the beginning it wasn't that easy as we had to move very quickly but as we widen that we would like to offer people some choice."

Vaccine Management Tool

She then reminded us that the plan is to have a digital platform which will allow people to change either the time or place of their appointments. The Vaccination Management Tool was developed in response to the pandemic and it functions on PCs tablets and iPhones. It can be used in any setting where the vaccine is being administered. It means that vaccinators will be able to see immediately whether the patient is being given a dose of vaccine for the first or second time and also which vaccine they received.

The information collected on the app will be linked with testing data to help show the efficacy of each vaccine. The app was already trialled in Greater Glasgow and Clyde for the winter flu programme. It was developed by NHS Education for Scotland in partnership with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, NHS Lothian and NHS Fife, NHS National Services Scotland and Public Health Scotland.

The experts we heard from today confirmed that the vaccine is not immediately effective. It is thought to be effective around 28 days after it is administered, and of course nobody yet knows how long the vaccine will work for. The Deputy Chief Medical Officer confirmed that it is also not yet clear whether this will become an annual vaccination such as the winter flu programme is.

The vaccine deployment plan is [here](#) and features a useful FAQ at the end.



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[su_spoiler class="my-custom-spoiler" title="Stay At Home Guidance"]

To minimise the risk of spreading the virus, you must stay at home as much as possible. By law, in a level 4 area, you can only leave your home (or garden) for an essential purpose.

There is a list of examples of reasonable excuses below. Although you can leave home for these purposes, you should stay as close to home as possible. Shop on-line or use local shops and services wherever you can. Travel no further than you need to reach to a safe, non-crowded place to exercise in a socially distanced way. To minimise the risk of spread of Coronavirus it is crucial that we all avoid unnecessary travel.

Examples of reasonable excuses to go out:

for work or an activity associated with seeking employment, or to provide voluntary or charitable services, but only where that cannot be done from your home.

for education including, school, college, university or other essential purposes connected with a course of study.

for essential shopping, including essential shopping for a vulnerable person. You should use online shopping or shops and other services in your immediate area wherever you can.

to obtain or deposit money, where it is not possible to do so from home.

for healthcare, including COVID-19 testing and vaccination.

for childcare or support services for parents or expectant parents.

for essential services, including services of a charitable or voluntary nature such as food banks, alcohol or drug support services.

to access public services where it is not possible to do so, including from home:

services provided to victims (such as victims of crime), social-care services,

accessing day care centres,

services provided by the Department for Work and Pensions,

services provided to victims (including victims of crime),

asylum and immigration services and interviews,

waste or recycling services,

to provide care, assistance, support to or respite for a vulnerable person

to provide or receive emergency assistance.

to participate in or facilitate shared parenting.

to visit a person in an extended household.

to meet a legal obligation including satisfying bail conditions, to participate in legal proceedings, to comply with a court mandate in terms of sentence imposed or to register a birth.

for attendance at court including a remote jury centre, an inquiry, a children's hearing, tribunal proceedings or to resolve a dispute via Alternative Dispute Resolution.

for essential animal welfare reasons, such as exercising or feeding a horse or going to a vet.

local outdoor recreation, sport or exercise, walking, cycling, golf, or running that starts and finishes at the same place (which can be up to 5 miles from the boundary of your local authority area) as long as you abide by the rules on meeting other households

to attend a marriage ceremony or registration of a civil partnership.

to attend a funeral or for compassionate reasons which relate to the end of a person's life. This includes gatherings related to the scattering or interring of ashes, a stone setting ceremony and other similar commemorative events.

if you are a minister of religion or worship leader, for the purposes of leading an act of worship (broadcast or online), conducting a marriage or civil partnership ceremony or a

funeral.

to donate blood.

for activities in connection with moving home (including viewing a property), or for activities in connection with the maintenance, purchase, sale, letting, or rental of residential property that the person owns or is otherwise responsible for. Travelling for the purposes of undertaking essential work on a property other than your main residence should not be used as a pretext for a holiday. You should not stay longer than for the length of time required to undertake the necessary work.

to avoid injury, illness or to escape a risk of harm.

for those involved in professional sports, for training, coaching or competing in an event.

to visit a person receiving treatment in a hospital, staying in a hospice or care home, or to accompany a person to a medical appointment.

to register or vote in a Scottish or UK Parliament, Local Government or overseas election or by-election, including on behalf of someone else by proxy

to visit a person detained in prison, young offenders institute, remand centre, secure accommodation or other place of detention.

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You can only meet people from another household outdoors and in indoor public spaces for certain reasons, such as for work, to join your extended household, for sport, exercise, social interaction or to provide care and support for a vulnerable person. This can include providing emotional support for someone whose wellbeing is at risk, including for those who are isolated because of disability or a caring situation. Read [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): advice for unpaid carers](#)

Up to 2 people from 2 separate households can meet outdoors for sport, exercise or social interaction.

Children under the age of 12 from these households do not count towards the total number of people permitted to gather outdoors.

Children under 12 do not need to maintain physical distance from others indoors or outdoors.

The members of an individual or extended household can meet outdoors for sport, exercise or social interaction.

Those at a higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus (including those who had been shielding, people 70 and over, people who are pregnant and people with an underlying medical condition) should strictly follow the physical distancing guidance.

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