

Health Secretary asks for clarity on vaccine supply

Health Secretary, Humza Yousaf, has written to The Secretary of State for Health, Matt Hancock, asking what can be done to speed up the supply of the Pfizer vaccine in the coming weeks.

Writing to Mr Hancock ahead of a four nation meeting of Health Ministers today, Thursday 10 June 2021, Mr Yousaf stressed the need to bring forward the supply of the Pfizer vaccine.

He stated that the vaccination programme in Scotland could maintain or increase its pace if there were greater supplies of the Pfizer vaccine, which is due to reduce in supply in the coming weeks before picking up again in July.

The full text of the letter is as follows:

8 June 2021

I am sure you will join me in welcoming the outstanding progress all nations are delivering on the vaccination programme. I am delighted that in the last week, we reached the important milestones of vaccinating over 75 per cent of those aged 18 and older with first doses, with over 50 per cent now fully vaccinated.

The tireless work of all those involved in the vaccination programme means we can continue to stay ahead in the race against the virus. I commend the work of the UK Vaccines

Taskforce in securing vaccine supply to support this effort and I value the strong working relationships that our officials have developed over the course of the last year on this.

In Scotland, similar to our four nations counterparts, we are working hard towards the end of July target for offering first doses to all those aged 18 and over. This has become even more important as we implement the adjustments to dose schedule set out by JCVI and deploying additional accessible routes to reach communities given the increase in prevalence of the Delta variant. I am very clear that this is a race and we must therefore do absolutely everything in our power to accelerate our efforts to vaccinate as many people as possible.

I appreciate we are all doing what we can in this regard, but I am conscious that the recent changes by JCVI on the role of AstraZeneca, have placed increased pressure on our supply of Pfizer in particular. The latest forecast on supply would indicate that Pfizer will be particularly tight over the next few weeks and as a consequence the programme won't be able to accelerate as much as I would wish.

I know that the Vaccines Taskforce and colleagues in BEIS are working incredibly hard to maximise volumes of all supply including Pfizer. Notwithstanding this, I would be grateful to discuss what more could be done to further increase the available supply in the coming weeks to support efforts to deliver the programme at pace. I would of course be happy to discuss this at our next four nations Ministerial call if that would be useful.

HUMZA YOUSAF