



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy



Department
of Health &
Social Care

Nadhim Zahawi MP
Minister for Business and Industry
Minister for COVID Vaccine
Deployment

Department for Business, Energy &
Industrial Strategy

Department of Health & Social Care

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Mr Williams,

Thank you for your correspondence of 4 January regarding COVID-19 vaccination. Please accept my sincere apologies for the delay in replying to you.

Thank you very much for your kind letter congratulating me on my appointment as Minister for COVID Vaccine Deployment. It is a huge privilege to be joining the Department responsible for leading the health and social care system on which everyone in this country depends.

I understand your concerns about the prioritisation of COVID-19 vaccination.

The Government accepted the recommendations from the independent Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) to authorise the COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer/BioNTech, Oxford/AstraZeneca and Moderna. This follows months of rigorous clinical trials and a thorough analysis of the data by experts at the MHRA, who have concluded that all three vaccines met its strict standards of safety, quality and effectiveness.

An enormous amount of work has taken place to ensure we have the logistical expertise, transport and workforce to roll out a vaccine according to clinical priority, at the speed at which it can be manufactured. Planning considerations include the size and make-up of the workforce needed to deliver an extensive vaccination programme, training requirements, guidance and equipment, as well as the supporting infrastructure required, including warehousing, transport, logistics and storage. There are now over 2,700 sites across the UK already offering vaccines to those at most at risk based on age and clinical priority.

From the beginning of the outbreak, our policies have been guided by the advice of the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies, which is led by the Chief Scientific Adviser and Chief Medical Officer for England, and our response is kept under constant review. We follow advice from the independent experts on the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) about which groups of people to prioritise for COVID-19 vaccines.

We have an ambitious timetable for phase one of our vaccine deployment programme. By 15 February we aim to have offered a first vaccine dose to everyone in the top four priority groups identified by the JCVI:

- all residents in a care home for older adults and their carers;
- all those 80 years of age and over, and frontline health and social care workers;
- all those 75 years of age and over; and


- all those 70 years of age and over, and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals.

This is a challenging period for many, and the NHS is working hard to vaccinate those most at risk as soon as possible.

Phase two will focus on further reduction in hospitalisation and targeted vaccination of those at high risk of exposure and/or those delivering key public services. Prioritisation decisions for the next phase of delivery are subject to the surveillance and monitoring of data and information from phase one, as well as further input from independent scientific experts such as the JCVI.

Thank you again for taking the time to write and I hope that this reply is helpful to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Zahawi', with a stylized, flowing script.

NADHIM ZAHAWI MP

Minister for COVID Vaccine Deployment
Minister for Business and Industry