

December 2020

As we continue to deal with the impact of coronavirus on all of our lives, we now have the news we have been hoping for since March. We are now beginning to roll out COVID-19 vaccines in Scotland.

To start with, our supply of vaccines is likely to remain limited, until more vaccines under development become available to use. This means we will have to prioritise. We are doing that in line with advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccinations and Immunisations, to make sure those most at risk are protected quickly.

This means that to start with we are vaccinating those in care homes for older adults, frontline health and social care workers, and those over 80. We soon hope to begin to roll the vaccine out to other priority groups. This will include those at additional clinical risk from the virus, and those over 50, working step by step in order of age with older people coming first.

This approach is designed with the aim of covering 99 per cent of preventable deaths from COVID-19. I am grateful to all those who have already come forward to receive the first vaccines.

I also want to thank those that are not in these first priority groups for their patience as we act first to prevent severe illness and loss of life. I recognise that many other groups, including key workers, face additional risk during the pandemic often as they fulfil critical roles. We want to get vaccines to everyone as quickly and safely as we can and we hope to reach all key groups soon.

Please be assured that these vaccines, like all medicines in use in Scotland, have been independently assessed against rigorous standards of safety and effectiveness. I would encourage all those that are eligible to receive a vaccine to do so, it is critically important to reduce risk to you and your loved ones.

The COVID-19 vaccination programme is undoubtedly one of the most complex and challenging logistical operations the Scottish Government has faced. Nevertheless, we will be guided by the best clinical advice to deliver vaccines across Scotland.

While news of a vaccine promises light at the end of the tunnel, it is not a quick fix and we all need to continue to stick to the rules for a while longer.

We must remember that even with a vaccine, Scotland will face restrictions for some time to come. Until we have the full information about the impact of the early COVID vaccines, restrictions will still be needed and it is critical that everyone continues to follow FACTS

Jeanne Freeman
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport

January 2021

~~In what has t-ha~~ been a tough year and as we continue to deal with the impact of coronavirus on all of our lives, we now have the news we have been hoping for since last March. We are now beginning to roll out COVID-19 vaccines in Scotland.

Whilst this is great news it is important for us to ~~that, until more vaccines under development are approved for use. the overall acknowledge that the~~ supply of vaccines ~~to vaccinate the whole adult population will is~~ likely ~~be to remain limited, until more vaccines under development become available to use.~~

This means that we will have to prioritise. We are doing that in line with advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccinations and Immunisations, to make sure those most at risk are vaccinated first.

This means that, to begin with ~~in the coming weeks, we~~ are vaccinating those in care homes for older adults, ~~both residents and staff. (residents and staff)~~, patient facing health and social care workers, and those over the age of 80.

Once we have completed vaccinating those groups and have greater certainty about the supply of the vaccine we will roll out the vaccine to other priority groups. This will include those at additional clinical risk from the virus, and those over 50. We will work through these groups in order of age with older people vaccinated first. This will take some months. You do not have to do anything, we will contact you and you do not need to get in touch with your GP.

The vaccines we will use, like all medicines in use in Scotland, have been independently assessed against rigorous standards of safety and effectiveness.

I would encourage all those that are eligible to receive a vaccine to do so when you are invited. It is critically important to reduce the risk to you and your loved ones from COVID-19, and I hope those who have been vaccinated will also share their experience with others.

I also want to thank those that are not in the initial priority groups for their patience. We want to get vaccines to everyone as quickly and safely as we can. The COVID-19 vaccination programme is one of the most complex and challenging logistical operations our NHS has faced.

The launch of Scotland's COVID-19 vaccination programme promises light at the end of the tunnel, but it is important we all remember it is not a quick fix.

Even with a vaccine, Scotland will face some restrictions for the foreseeable future, so we need to continue to stick to the rules for a while longer and follow the FACTS.

~~Stick with it Scotland,~~ this is great news as we head into 2021.

Jeanne Freeman
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport