



Department of Health & Social Care

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Dear Chair

PAC Hearing - Eleventh Report of Session 2022-23: The rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine programme in England. Recommendation Four.

In its response to Recommendation Four of *the Eleventh Report - The rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine programme in England* my Department committed to write to the Committee in Spring 2023 setting out the main improvements being made as a result of work to understand the lessons from the COVID-19 vaccine programme.

England's vaccination programme, from research and development of vaccines against COVID-19 to the deployment of vaccines to over 93% of the adult population aged 12 years old and over (as of 7 June 2022), has been one of the most successful and effective initiatives in the history of the UK's science and public administration. The Department and its partners are committed to learning from this programme and to developing pandemic preparedness planning, integrating new scientific information and learning from outbreaks, including COVID-19.

With this in view the Department is investing in future pandemic preparedness. In December 2022, the Government and Moderna entered a strategic partnership to set up mRNA research and development and manufacturing facilities in the UK. Under the partnership, Moderna will build a new Innovation and Technology Centre in the UK, which will create more than 150 highly skilled jobs and have the capacity to produce up to 250 million vaccines per year in the event of a pandemic.

For its part, NHS England has reduced the costs of deploying COVID-19 vaccines, while maintaining high levels of uptake. The deployment programme remains committed to realising further in-year efficiencies as well as identifying savings for the next financial year. This means that estimated costs for 2023/24 are considerably lower than the projected spend for 2022/23. We are also promoting operational efficiency through, for example, increasing co-administration of COVID-19 and flu vaccines. More



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than double the number of COVID-19 and flu vaccines were co-administered in the autumn 2022/23 campaign compared to the previous campaign in 2021/22.

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the importance of driving high uptake across all sectors of society, including demographics and communities with typically low vaccine uptake. The Department, and its partners across the health system, continue to use population health data and intelligence, including qualitative insights, to enable targeting of under-vaccinated populations, including those groups with low vaccination rates for COVID-19 and flu. A pilot proof of concept exercise to assess the feasibility of data capture for evaluating interventions intended to increase vaccination uptake among underserved populations was undertaken by NHS England during the 2022/23 autumn vaccination campaign. The next phase of this pilot proof of concept will be undertaken during the spring 2023 campaign, informing how initiatives could be deployed in future campaigns. Other initiatives have included offering vaccination services in a more diverse range of settings.

NHS England is leading development of an integrated vaccination and immunisation strategy, aiming to align vaccination and immunisation services over the longer-term, drawing on the successes and lessons from the COVID-19 vaccine rollout, and the established flu and routine immunisation programmes. This strategy will focus on improving uptake and addressing health inequalities, data and technology, vaccine delivery models, and how vaccination services can support wider public health and prevention. This strategy is expected to be published later this year.

My Department remains committed to continuing to learn lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic and will work to build on the successes of the vaccine programme in future campaigns.

Yours sincerely,

SIR CHRIS WORMALD
PERMANENT SECRETARY