NHS to deliver first jabs with new Oxford vaccine today

4 January 2021

The NHS will begin administering the new Oxford AstraZeneca Coronavirus Vaccine today (Monday) as the health service rapidly scales up the biggest immunisation programme in its history.

The NHS will be the first health service in the world to deliver the life-saving jab, which was approved last week, in the next stage of the phased vaccine programme.

Hundreds of new vaccination sites are due to come onstream this week, joining the 700 which are already in operation.

The first Oxford AstraZeneca vaccinations will be delivered at a small number of hospitals for the first few days for surveillance purposes, as is standard practice, before the bulk of supplies are send to hundreds of GP-led services later in the week.  
Oxford University NHS Hospitals Trust, where the vaccine was developed, is expected to be among the first sites to administer it on Monday morning.

NHS staff vaccinated more than three quarters of a million people in less than three weeks after that, official figures released last week show.

Around two thirds, some 524,439, were delivered to people aged 80 and over who are particularly vulnerable to the virus, meaning that around one in five people of that age are already protected.

However, a total of one million jabs were delivered by New Year’s Eve and vaccination is now being rapidly accelerated as more supplies come onstream in the days and weeks ahead.

Last week, regulators and the four UK Chief Medical Officers announced that the gap between first and second doses of the Pfizer vaccine should be lengthened so that more people can be protected faster. Delivery of the Pfizer jab, the first vaccine to be approved, is therefore also now able to be accelerated.

The NHS is supporting GPs to reschedule appointments that had already been made as part of the effort to cut the number of people falling ill with Covid and save many more lives.

An army of current and former NHS staff have applied to become vaccinators, with tens of thousands having already completed their online training. They will be deployed as more vaccine supplies become available.

The new Oxford vaccine is easier to transport and store than the Pfizer jab, which has to be kept at minus 70 degrees until shortly before it is used, making it easier to deliver in care homes.

The NHS is giving GPs an extra £10 for every Care Home resident that they vaccinate by the end of the month.

A majority of Care Home residents are expected to be vaccinated by then.

NHS staff are also being prioritised now that more vaccine is coming on stream.

Background

There are more than 700 vaccination sites.

Up to 100 hospital sites are due to come online across the country, subject to final assurance checks, this week.

There are also another 180 GP-led services which are due to come online this week.

The following hospitals will start delivering the vaccine for surveillance purposes tomorrow ahead of the rollout to hundreds of GP-led services later in the week:

·        Royal Free Hospital London NHS Foundation Trust

·        Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust

·        Guy’s and St Thomas’ NHS Foundation Trust

·        Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

·        University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust

·        George Eliot Hospital NHS Trust