



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

William Wragg MP
Chair
Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs
Select Committee

T +44 (0) 20 7215 5000
E enquiries@beis.gov.uk
W www.gov.uk

27 January 2020

Response to the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Select Committee, Covid data inquiry: vaccination statistics

Dear Chair,

Thank you for your letter on 12 January 2021, and your congratulations for the COVID-19 vaccination programme reaching our 2 million vaccinations milestone. I hope you will be encouraged further by the fact that since writing, that total has almost tripled and over 6 million first doses have now been administered across the UK.

The COVID-19 vaccination programme is committed to publishing clear and simple updates. As such I would like to assure you that we are fully considering the issues addressed in your letter and have provided some more information below for further clarity, addressing each of the points you have raised in turn.

1. Please update and clarify the explanatory notes on the dashboard's vaccination statistics

You asked for clarification on the explanatory notes on the dashboard's vaccination statistics. Since then, the explanatory notes on the Government dashboard have been updated to state that daily reported data for the UK includes all vaccination events that are entered on the relevant system at the time of extract (i.e. all data that was reported as of midnight the previous day in the case of England). Hence, the daily publication of COVID-19 vaccinations in England on the NHSE website, shows the total first and second doses given to date as reported by midnight on the date prior to publication. This data is introduced as provisional, as the statistics published are continuously revised over time. Any discrepancies in the daily data are corrected over the course of the week to produce a more statistically robust weekly dataset. Likewise, weekly data will be aggregated into a further robust data set when published on a monthly basis. NHSE/I and PHE, as well as the respective authorities in Devolved Administrations, are collaborating in order to provide clear and accurate data. As more robust datasets become available, they may be able to publish more segmented data in the future.

2. Please include breakdowns of data by targeted group

Since 24 December, National Health Service England (NHSE) have published weekly UK-wide data on the total number of vaccinations, and the breakdown between over and under 80s for England. Whilst acknowledging that data breakdowns for all 9 of the Phase I priority groups are not yet published, it is very much the government's intention for the COVID-19 vaccine deployment programme that as more robust data becomes available more granular data will be published. The government is working closely with colleagues in the Devolved Administrations to ensure more granular data is accurate and consistent when published.

3. Please provide local breakdowns to at least region

We moved to daily data publications for the UK from 11 January, on the UK Government's coronavirus dashboard, and daily regional data for England from 14 January¹.

4. Please include progress against targets on the website

I very much agree with the need you have referenced to monitor vaccination progress through the data published. We are now publishing daily data and weekly more detailed breakdowns and as the COVID-19 vaccine deployment programme progresses the intention is that a fuller picture on the progress of the programme from an epidemiological perspective will be produced and published regularly.

Bringing data together from across the UK

The UK government dashboard published by PHE on behalf of the Health family is a daily collection of UK wide data published by the respective authorities of England and Devolved Administrations. By publishing the COVID-19 vaccination data here, this follows the current process in place for other COVID-19 statistical data releases, including UK level statistics on deaths, testing, hospital admissions and other key statistics of public interest. The ambition is for this data to become more granular as the UK COVID-19 vaccine deployment programme progresses.

I trust this letter addresses the concerns raised and I remain available to provide any further clarification required.

Yours sincerely,



NADHIM ZAHAWI MP
Minister for COVID Vaccine Deployment
Minister for Business and Industry

¹ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/covid-19-vaccinations/>



PACAC (Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee)

House of Commons · London SW1A 0AA
Tel 020 7219 3268 Email pacac@parliament.uk
Website www.parliament.uk/pacac

Rt Hon. Michael Gove MP
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office
By email

12th January 2021

Dear Michael,

**Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Select Committee, Covid data inquiry:
vaccination statistics**

As you are aware, my Committee is conducting an inquiry on Covid 19 data. We welcome the addition of vaccination statistics to the Covid 19 Government dashboard, and to the NHS England website. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate all those involved on administering the first 2 million vaccinations.

Our inquiries so far have highlighted how important it is that statistics are clearly and impartially presented, that they include adequate explanatory notes (including on limitations or uncertainties in the data), and are aligned to any stated targets (so that progress can be monitored and scrutinised). I am, therefore, writing to clarify some points on the vaccination statistics so that the sort of confusion that ensued over the testing data can be avoided. Any confusion over this data could be a distraction from the vital progress the Government are making on the vaccination effort.

1. **Please update and clarify the explanatory notes on the dashboard's vaccination statistics:** The section titled "People who have received vaccinations, by report date (daily)", contains explanatory notes that appear to relate to the (more accurate) weekly statistical releases. NHS England explains that daily data is "announced vaccinations" and is "provisional", whereas weekly releases "provides more accurate and detailed data". This sort of small inconsistency can lead to confusion later. Can the website be updated so that it explains whether the data is collected daily or weekly, whether it is provisional or final, and whether it is "announced" vaccinations, and what "announced" means.
2. **Please include breakdowns of data by targeted group:** The NHS England weekly data tells us whether those vaccinated are over or under 80, but contains no further

PACAC (Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee)

House of Commons · London SW1A 0AA
Tel 020 7219 3268 Email pacac@parliament.uk
Website www.parliament.uk/pacac

breakdowns. This information is not included on the Government dashboard. Can you publish the data breakdowns for all 9 of the "high priority" groups, which we assume you are already collecting to track progress. This will be more important as some areas start to move down the priority list more quickly than others.

3. **Please provide local breakdowns to at least region:** you produce breakdowns of cases and other data to local area level. Vaccination statistics should be produced to this level of local granularity and should be explorable through the drop-down menus on the dashboard.
4. **Please include progress against targets on the website:** currently the dashboard and NHS England websites contain raw numbers, but these numbers are not meaningful unless we can see how this relates to overall numbers to Government. Can you publish your target numbers for each "priority group", or best estimates of the number of people in each "priority group", alongside numbers vaccinated so we can monitor progress.

I realise that Health is a devolved matter but it is vitally important that the public can see information across the UK. And it has been very helpful that data sets are already being published together to include Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. I would be grateful if you could update the Committee on the work that Cabinet Office is doing in its coordinating role to bring together data from all the nations and whether granular data for the other nations can be published alongside that for England.

I am copying this letter to Ed Humpherson, the statistics regulator, asking him to alert the Committee if he has any concerns about the vaccination data in the coming weeks and months.

Yours ever



William Wragg MP
Chair, Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee