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The Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP
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Nadhim Zahawi MP
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(Minister for COVID Vaccine
Deployment)
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To all MPs

COVID-19 VACCINE UPDATE

Dear Colleague,

We are writing to inform you that today the UK has become the first country in the world to have a clinically approved vaccine for supply.

This morning, the government accepted the recommendation from the independent Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) to approve Pfizer/BioNTech's Covid-19 vaccine for use.

It follows months of rigorous clinical trials and a thorough analysis of the data by experts at the MHRA. They have concluded that the vaccine has met its strict standards of safety, quality and effectiveness. We have 40 million doses ordered for delivery over the coming months, enough to vaccinate up to a third of our population. We are pleased to confirm that the NHS will be able to start vaccinating from early next week.

Our NHS has decades of experience in delivering large-scale vaccination programmes, not least in delivering the flu vaccine programme each year. They are now putting their extensive preparations into operation for our Covid-19 vaccine deployment programme. They are in the process of establishing vaccination centres across the country that can manage the logistical challenge of storing the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine at minus 70 degrees, while also establishing vaccination hubs in hospitals for NHS staff.

Today, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation has published its advice setting out the order of priority according to clinical need; this includes care home residents and their carers, the over 80s, and the frontline health and social care workers. We will deliver according to clinical prioritisation and operational necessity. All Covid-19 vaccines will be free at the point of delivery, distributed according to need rather than someone's ability to pay.

The Pfizer/BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine is the first of seven different vaccine candidates to gain regulatory approval in the UK, but we are confident it will not be the last. To date, we have procured 357 million doses of Covid-19 vaccines on behalf of the whole of the UK.

This approval is UK-wide, and we are working with all the Devolved Administrations to ensure they will be deployed fairly right across the UK.

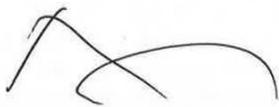
Today's exciting news marks an important step in our Covid-19 vaccine deployment programme and a great hope for every one of our constituents in the UK.

Help is on the way, but we must all continue to play our part. We must encourage everyone to abide by the necessary restrictions that will give our NHS the breathing space to continue to do its vital work and make our Covid-19 vaccine deployment programme a national success.

Yours ever,



MATT HANCOCK



ALOK SHARMA



NADHIM ZAHAWI