

19th January 2021

Sikh Assembly & SDDA(UK) Welcome the COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout

Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh

The UK Government has embarked on an ambitious rollout of three COVID-19 Vaccines after the MHRA (Medicines & Healthcare products Regulatory Agency) confirmed its safety and standards for effectiveness. The new vaccines will ensure the optimum protection against the disease, especially for the most vulnerable, and healthcare workers in all settings. The Joint Committee on Vaccination & Immunisation has set out the order of priority for nine groups identified to receive the vaccine. These include the groups that the Government have prioritised to be vaccinated by mid-February which will protect 13 million people. Currently, this includes:

- Residents in adult care homes and their carers
- Those over 80 and frontline health and social care workers
- Those 70 years and over and clinically vulnerable.

Sikh Assembly and the Sikh Doctors and Dentists Association (SDDA UK) welcome the rollout of the

Key Points:

- *The vaccines have been tested on over 30,000 persons of all ages, ethnicities, and gender, and confirmed to be safe and effective.*
- *If you are considered to be at high risk from catching COVID 19, due to medical conditions, age or you work in key areas, you will be invited before others who are at lower risk.*
- *When invited to have your vaccine, please keep the appointment, and let the vaccinators know of any medical conditions, allergies and whether you are pregnant.*
- *The vaccines will protect you against the new variants of COVID 19 as well as the original.*

COVID vaccines, which will start to protect those in the high-risk categories in all communities that have felt the full impact of COVID-19. To overcome the pandemic, it is imperative that as many people are vaccinated as quickly as possible. Once the high-risk groups have been vaccinated, the remaining age groups and those with underlying conditions will be prioritised, as per Department of Health guidelines.

The current three vaccines (Pfizer-BioNTech, Oxford-AstraZeneca and Moderna) have been assessed for safety and efficacy by the UK independent regulator MHRA. Any individuals who may be allergic to any components of the vaccine or are pregnant should consult their General Practitioner before vaccination. JCVI and the World Health Organisation (WHO) have recommended that the vaccine is safe for use with breastfeeding.

All viruses change form frequently as seen with the Influenza (Flu) virus, and coronavirus is no different. Although newer coronavirus variants are spreading faster in the UK (50 to 70%), these are not known

to be any more lethal. The expert consensus is that the vaccines will still protect against these newer variants. To prevent the virus from changing its form further and escaping effects of the vaccine, prompt vaccinating of our population is of extreme importance.

The Sikh Community, like all communities, have lost loved ones to COVID-19 and faced immense difficulties and restrictions on how they live their lives, including visiting Gurdwara Sahibs. COVID vaccinations are a key solution in our fight against the current pandemic.

At the recent Sikh Roundtable meeting with Lord Greenhalgh (Minister for Faith) and Nadim Zahawi (Minister responsible for Vaccine Deployment), Lord Greenhalgh highlighted the vaccine programme is already saving lives. One in 20 lives is already being saved in care homes and 1 in 250 in the most clinically vulnerable groups. Sikh Assembly asked Ministers for us to be kept updated with ongoing research results related to the vaccines.

Sikh Assembly and SDDA (UK) endorse the current UK COVID vaccination programme. Together with other Sikh organisations, we are keen to play our part to disseminate the correct information to our communities to make fully informed decisions when invited for COVID vaccination. In particular, we will aim to increase understanding of the vaccine and the need for ongoing mask-wearing, hygiene and social distancing.

Please follow the BBC link for [Coronavirus vaccine Q&A in Punjabi](#) by Dr Dilsher Singh.

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