

Chief medical officers approve vaccines for all UK



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Vaccines for 12- to 15-year-olds are expected to be approved in the UK after chief medical officers advised ministers they should begin a rollout for that age group.



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© Rachel Wisniewski/Reuters Trung Nguyen, aged 13, gets his second dose of the Covid vaccine at the zoo in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania - Rachel Wisniewski/Reuters

Prof Chris Whitty and his counterparts in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland said the benefits of vaccinating young people and reducing transmission of the virus outweighed potential costs of side effects for children and disruption to school timetables.

They also recommended that ministers “present the risk-benefit decisions in a way that is accessible to children and young people, as well as their parents”.

“A child-centred approach to communication and deployment of the vaccine should be the primary objective,” they said.

Boris Johnson, Prof Whitty and Sir Patrick Vallance, the Chief Scientific Adviser, will give a press conference on Tuesday in which the Prime Minister is expected to announce he has accepted his chief medical officers' advice and the rollout for 12- to 15-year-olds will begin.

A similar rollout for children aged 16 and over is already running.

In a letter to Sajid Javid, the Health Secretary, and other health ministers in devolved parts of the UK, the medical officers warned that “in those aged 12-15, Covid-19 rarely, but occasionally, leads to serious illness, hospitalisation and even less commonly death”.

“The risks of vaccination (mainly myocarditis) are also very rare,” they said.

"Vaccination, if deployed, should only be seen as an adjunct to other actions to maintain children and young people in secondary school and minimise further education disruption and therefore medium- and longer-term public health harm," they wrote.

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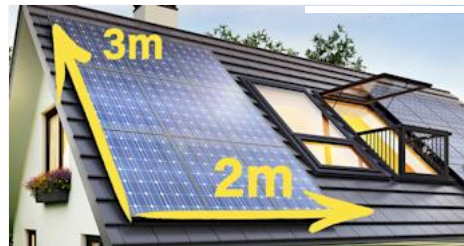
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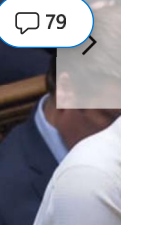
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