

VACCINATE THE WORLD TO END THE PANDEMIC IN THE UK

Vastly unequal vaccine access is prolonging the pandemic. Ensuring low- and middle-income countries have access to first and second doses, and have the resources to distribute them, is the fastest way to protect people, the NHS, businesses and children's education here in the UK.

In October 2021 G20 leaders committed to help advance the WHO targets to vaccinate 40% of people in all countries by the end of 2021 and 70% of people by mid-2022, however, the world is significantly off track and **the global vaccine divide is widening**. Just four countries in mainland Africa reached the 40% target by the end of 2021¹.

Only 8.9% of people in low-income countries have received at least one dose², compared to 90.3% in the UK³. **Nine times more people have received boosters in wealthier countries than first doses in low-income countries⁴**. At the current pace, it could take over a decade before low-income countries achieve vaccination levels similar to high-income countries⁵.

THE SPREAD OF VARIANTS CAN BE PREVENTED

The emergence of Omicron must be a wake up call. Highly transmissible variants of COVID-19 will continue to threaten progress until governments take actions that address inequalities in global vaccine supply. We have the tools, the science, and the resources to end the pandemic but to date, actions by the UK and G7 governments have not been adequate.

As highly transmissible variants, such as Omicron, continue to spread, boosters become increasingly important in protecting against these variants. However, **the best way to prevent the spread of highly transmissible variants is to ensure equitable access to first and second doses everywhere**. The longer we wait to fully vaccinate the world, the greater the threat to us all. Minimising the amount of virus circulating is key to reducing the risk of new variants.

☒ very strongly believe ☒ that we should be maximising the number of vaccines available in low and middle-income countries. It is a humanitarian need. It is a need as fellow global citizens. Actually, it is enlightened self-interest as well because there is a problem for everybody wherever there is an issue. There is absolutely nothing to be lost and everything to be gained.☒

- Professor Sir Chris Whitty - Chief Medical Officer, 16th December 2021⁶

THE CONTINUING COSTS TO THE UK ECONOMY

As long as COVID-19 continues to circulate it will dampen economic recovery, hamper global trade and tourism, and disrupt supply chains. **The pandemic is estimated to cost the UK at least a further £74 billion this year**, according to a study by the International Chamber of Commerce⁷. Add to this the toll of restrictions and disruptions to all our daily lives. The costs of inaction heavily outweigh the UK paying its fair share to end the pandemic. **Taking action to end the pandemic everywhere, not just at home, is overwhelmingly in our self-interest and a smart investment.**

THE BRITISH PUBLIC SUPPORT ACTION NOW

Over the last year polling has continuously shown that the British public supports sharing doses with other countries and prioritising making doses available to healthcare workers around the world⁸. Polling conducted by ComRes in January 2022⁹ found that:

- ✘ **72% of people surveyed agree that ending the pandemic globally should be a priority for the UK government in 2022.**
- ✘ **71% agreed that the government should rapidly speed up the delivery of doses that it has promised to share.**
- ✘ 63% agree that **if** new variants are likely in countries that have low levels of vaccine access, we should prioritise ensuring the COVID-19 vaccine is available everywhere over additional (fourth) booster shots for people in the UK.
- ✘ 64% agreed that the government should stop over-purchasing to ensure available supply for COVAX.
- ✘ 72% agreed that the UK economy will continue to suffer until the pandemic is beaten globally.
- ✘ 68% agreed that we **never** get back to normal life unless the vaccine is available everywhere to everyone.

WHAT THE UK MUST DO NOW TO PLAY OUR PART IN GLOBAL EFFORTS TO VACCINATE THE WORLD

The UK was an early and vocal supporter of multilateral efforts to scale up access to vaccination in the world's poorest countries, committing £845 million towards the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A) and COVAX in 2020, and a further £16 million in 2021. At the UK hosted G7 leaders announced commitments to share 870 million doses by June 2022. This included a commitment of 100 million doses from the UK, with 30 million to be shared by the end of 2021.

However, these actions fall significantly short of what is needed by the UK to end the pandemic. **Despite incredible progress rolling out the domestic vaccine and booster programmes, this is not enough to keep us safe, and there are gaping holes in our COVID-19 defences.**

There are currently big barriers to achieving the target to vaccinate 70% of all populations by mid-2022. The UK must urgently step up in the following ways:

1. Commit financing

Contribute £1 billion to the global pandemic fight in early 2022 to support ACT-Accelerator partners to purchase enough vaccines, tests, treatments and PPE in low- and middle-income countries, and to meet essential delivery costs such as cold-chain equipment, syringes and training for healthcare workers to ensure vaccines are administered quickly.

On 30th December 2021 the Foreign Secretary pledged up to £105 million to help vulnerable countries tackle the Omicron variant, including support for scaled up testing and improved access to oxygen supplies¹⁰. A proportion of the £105 million pledged will count towards ACT-A¹¹. This is a welcome first step, however, the UK must go further.

£1 billion represents the UK's fair share of the \$27.7 billion needed by ACT-A in 2022 to procure and deliver priority interventions. In 2021 the UK fell far short of its fair share. Yet Canada, Germany, Norway and Saudi Arabia met their ACT-A fair shares between 2020-21.

A contribution of £1 billion is a tiny fraction of what a prolonged pandemic is costing our economy. The government has so far spent at least £315 billion on the pandemic¹². This is an extraordinary one-time investment to end the global pandemic and must not be at the expense of existing vital UK aid programmes.

The UK should also apply pressure to the Multilateral Development Banks to increase grant financing for low-income countries to boost domestic resources available for strained health systems and the additional costs of administering vaccines to their populations.

2. Rapidly share doses and stop over-purchasing

The UK has announced that it has met its pledge to share 30 million doses by the end of 2021. It must now take the following actions to accelerate and improve the terms of dose sharing:

- ☒ **Rapidly speed up the delivery of doses that the UK has promised to share.**
- ☒ **Share doses with sufficient shelf-life and ensure predictability of donated supply so that recipient countries have adequate notice and can ensure a successful roll out.**
- ☒ Publish up to date data on dose sharing, including use-by-dates and vaccine type.
- ☒ Stop over-purchasing doses to ensure available supply for COVAX and countries that have yet to administer first and second doses.
- ☒ Stop counting the value of donated doses within the 0.5% ceiling on overseas aid spending, and oppose proposals by the OECD DAC to value all doses at \$6.72, irrespective of the price paid by governments.

3. Support measures to rapidly scale up global manufacturing capacity

The UK must enact measures that increase the global supply of vaccines by investing in regional capacity, and backing policies that increase knowledge sharing, remove trade-related barriers and create tech transfer hubs. This includes the UK supporting a temporary waiver on intellectual property at the WTO so that developing countries can produce their own vaccines.

To discuss this briefing or for more information please contact:
Lis Wallace, Director of UK Policy and Advocacy at ONE: lis.wallace@one.org

January 2022

- 1 WHO AFRO, [Africa Covid-19 Dashboard](#) [Accessed 4th January 2022]
- 2 Our World in Data, [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Vaccinations Statistics and Research](#) [Accessed 10th January 2022]
- 3 UK Government, [Vaccinations in United Kingdom](#) [Accessed 10th January 2022]
- 4 ONE, [Data Dive: The 5 biggest barriers to ending the COVID-19 pandemic for good](#) [Accessed 4th January 2022]
- 5 ONE, [Data Dive: The astoundingly unequal vaccine rollout](#) [Accessed 4th January 2022]
- 6 House of Commons, [Oral evidence to the Health and Social Care Committee](#), 16th December 2021
- 7 National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper commissioned by the International Chamber of Commerce, [The economic case for global vaccinations: An epidemiological model with international production networks](#), January 2021
- 8 Polling conducted with ComRes in May 2021. Findings available on request.
- 9 Polling conducted with ComRes in January 2022. Findings available on request.
- 10 FCDO, [New support to help vulnerable countries tackle Omicron](#), 30th December 2021
- 11 Ibid. The FCDO published the activities that the pledge of up to £105 million will cover, including funding testing and oxygen supplies through the COVID-19 response mechanism established by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, however has not yet published the exact amount of funding which will be disbursed to the Global Fund in 2022.
- 12 House of Commons Library, [Public spending on the Covid pandemic](#), 7th December 2021