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England stars bowled over by vaccine rollout

- Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Professor Jonathan Van-Tam, took part in a virtual discussion with a selection of the England Men's cricket team's brightest stars, Mark Wood, Chris Jordan and Sam Curran, answering their questions around the Covid-19 vaccine
- Cricket commentator, Isa Guha, hosted the discussion and was also joined by Professor Nick Peirce, Chief Medical Officer of the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), addressing the impact that Covid-19 has had on cricket and the importance of encouraging vaccine uptake amongst fans

Professor Jonathan Van-Tam has been joined by members of the England Men's cricket team and the ECB's Chief Medical Officer, Professor Nick Peirce, in a discussion about the Covid-19 vaccine, hosted by presenter Isa Guha.

In a new film released today, teammates Mark Wood, Chris Jordan and Sam Curran virtually joined Professor Van-Tam for the question-and-answer session from India, where they are competing in their Twenty20 series.

At a time when some of England's most famous cricket grounds, including Lord's, are being used as centres to support the NHS vaccine rollout, the impact of the pandemic on the cricketing world has been felt for players and fans alike.

Discussing the national vaccine rollout, the players got the chance to ask Professor Van-Tam the questions on many people's lips – "are there any side effects?", "how does the vaccine protect people from coronavirus?" and "is it safe for all ethnic groups to take?".

With a noted rise in misinformation, Professor Van-Tam encouraged hesitant groups to seek information from trusted sources, reiterating that these effective vaccines are the best way to protect people from coronavirus and will save thousands of lives.

Separating fact from fiction, the players were informed that vaccines are tested through three phases of clinical trials to ensure they meet the gold standard and that, like all medicines, vaccines can cause side effects. However, most of these are mild and short-term, lasting no longer than a week, and not everyone gets them.

Professor Van-Tam addresses other questions from the players around safety, reassuring them that it the vaccine suitable for people from all ethnic backgrounds.

Whilst the national restrictions imposed to help tackle the spread of coronavirus mean that cricket fans have been unable to attend matches in the UK for the last year, with the incredible deployment speed of the Covid-19 vaccine, the ECB remains hopeful that stadiums will soon be full again if people take their vaccine when notified.

Concluding their chat, when asked if they would get their vaccine, Mark Wood, Chris Jordan and Sam Curran together pledged that they would when called because they trust the advice from experts and their doctors that it's safe and the best way for life to return to normality.

England cricketer, Chris Jordan, said: "It's been a strange experience playing in empty stadiums and I can't wait to have our fans back the team in person. Like many, I've had my own questions about the vaccine.

"With my understanding of the direction the world is heading in, and after speaking to Professor Van-Tam with my teammates, there's no doubt in my mind that I will get the vaccine when it's my turn."

England's Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Professor Jonathan Van-Tam, said: "It was a real pleasure to join some of England's cricket players and answer their questions about the vaccine. Vaccination is the best way to protect people from COVID and will save thousands of lives. Over 22 million people have now had their first dose, if people follow the guidance then we all hope that people will be cheering our cricketers and other sport stars on from the stands again soon."

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Matt Hancock, said: "Our brilliant healthcare workers and volunteers across the country have been working flat out to give the vaccine to millions of people, including at the vaccination site at Lord's Cricket Ground which has delivered more than 10,000 vaccinations. We are already seeing the real world positive effect of the vaccine programme on reducing hospitalisations and deaths and I would urge everyone who is offered it to get their jab to protect yourself and those around you."

Chief Medical Officer at the England and Wales Cricket Board, Professor Nick Peirce, said: "I'm proud of the way the England Cricket Community has adapted to adhere to the strict Covid guidelines and supported the NHS vaccine rollout however they can. We join in encouraging everyone to do their own research through trusted sources, like the NHS website, to be sure of the facts and get their vaccine when called."

Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Oliver Dowden CBE, said: "Cricket has made an outstanding contribution throughout the pandemic, and it was a real pleasure to visit the Lord's vaccine centre

recently where volunteers, NHS staff and the cricket community were working together to knock Covid for six. I want to thank the England squad for joining us in encouraging people to take up the vaccine when they are notified. A successful vaccine rollout is the best way we can get everyone back safely watching and playing, and I want us to have a brilliant summer of cricket.”

To reach a time when fans can return to stadiums to watch cricket matches live, high vaccine uptake and maintaining the Hands. Face. Space key behaviours is very important.

The Covid-19 vaccination programme is the biggest vaccination programme in NHS history, with over 20 million vaccinations carried out to date.

New data shows that both the Pfizer-BioNTech and Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccines significantly reduce severe COVID-19 in older adults and that the vaccines are working to reduce infections and save lives.

The UK’s vaccination programme is continuing to build up steadily with more people becoming eligible in the weeks and months in order of age and risk. Join the millions across the UK who have now safely received their first COVID-19 vaccine dose and don’t delay in getting your vaccine when it is offered to you.

People who have received a letter inviting them for a jab can log on to the national booking service at www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination and choose from 107 large-scale vaccination centres or 195 pharmacy led sites. Anyone unable to book online can call 119 free of charge, anytime between 7am and 11pm seven days a week.

For more information on the Covid-19 vaccine, visit: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/>

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Notes to Editors

View/download the new ECB Covid-19 Vaccine Q&A footage (embargoed

until 00:01 12th

March):

- Long-form film: <https://vimeo.com/521873623/04e2c4656e>

- 60-second film: <https://vimeo.com/521874010/d4d4d23e1d>

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