

Some 2.5 million NHS letters – covering almost the entire age cohort of 12- to 15-year-olds in England – are being sent out from tomorrow to parents and guardians in a blitz aimed at increasing uptake. It comes after the NHS's national booking service for Covid jabs opened up for 12- to 15-year-olds.

Dr Kanani, who is also deputy lead for the Covid vaccination programme, said: 'Millions of parents will be receiving letters from tomorrow inviting their children to get a Covid vaccine through the National Booking Service.

'This provides an additional way for 12- to 15-year-olds to get their vaccine following the rollout in schools that has seen more than a half million vaccinated.'

She added: 'The decision to get vaccinated has always been a private choice between a child and their parent or guardian – my 13-year-old son received his vaccine at school on the same day I had my booster dose in a local pharmacy.

'I would urge families to look at the information together and then book in to give children and their loved ones crucial protection ahead of winter.' Parents whose children have had the jab will also receive the letter, as it is part of a mass mailing. The NHS says to ignore it.

The sluggish nature of the campaign contrasts sharply with the situation in Scotland.

When the decision to vaccinate 12- to 15-year-olds was made on September 20, rates were similar in both countries – with 5.7 per cent of that age group jabbed in England, and 5.4 per cent in Scotland.

These youngsters had already been vaccinated because they are clinically vulnerable, or live with someone who is, meaning they fall into a higher priority group.

But in the month since then, Scotland has stormed ahead, having jabbed more than 50 per cent of its 12- to 15-year-olds – a vaccination rate of 3,640 children a day.

Over the same period, England has only managed to shift the dial to just under 20 per cent.

The contrasting campaigns may have contributed to the divergence in Covid case rates in under-15s since early September, when they stood at about 400 a week per 100,000 in both England and Scotland. In England, they have since shot up to more than 800 per 100,000, while in Scotland they have dropped to below 200.

Experts are worried that higher Covid case rates are starting to spill over into older age groups as children bring the virus home to parents and grandparents.

They believe that vaccinating secondary-school pupils is key to controlling the virus this winter, as Covid rates are currently at their highest in teenagers.

A recent modelling study calculated that jabbing all 12- to 15-year-olds could prevent tens of thousands of hospital admissions, mainly of older people, saving thousands of lives. If most of this age group remains unvaccinated, however, these benefits will not materialise.

## Government starts preparations for Plan B Covid restrictions

The government is preparing to roll back on Covid freedoms according to a leaked Whitehall document, with a return to face masks and Covid passports to stop a winter virus surge.

An urgent document detailing the Plan B measures was distributed on Friday from the UK Health Security Agency to town hall leaders.

The Official Sensitive email, seen by **The Sun**, asked if there was backing for an 'immediate enforcement of the new rules.

An official wrote: 'I have been asked to canvas opinion on the level of support for immediate roll out of the Winter Plan - Plan B.'

It lists a number of measures including vaccine passports in clubs and indoor and outdoor spaces.

There would also be legal requirements for face masks and a return to working from home.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10124033/Millions-Covid-vaccine-ministers-rip-booster-jab-booking-system.html>