

# UK expects significant reduction in vaccine supply in April

March 17 2021

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Public health officials in England said Wednesday that the number of people getting their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine will be "significantly constrained" from April because of a reduction in the

vaccine supply to the country.

A letter to regional health leaders said they should expect a "significant reduction in weekly supply available from manufacturers" beginning from the week of March 29. The reduction will continue for four weeks, it said.

When asked about the issue, Health Secretary Matt Hancock told a news briefing that supply was "always lumpy." He added that the supply from the European Union is "fulfilling contractual responsibilities and we fully expect those contracts to be delivered on."

He did not explain whether the expected supply reductions are related to the EU chief's warning Wednesday that the bloc would not hesitate to take action—including possible export restrictions—to ensure it receives the reliable supply of vaccines it was promised.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said "open roads run in both directions," and that the EU will "use whatever tool we need" to ensure "reciprocity and proportionality" in [vaccine](#) exports. While she did not name any countries, her warning appeared to be a veiled threat to the U.K.

Britain has seen Europe's highest [coronavirus](#) death toll, but its vaccination rollout has been far ahead of other countries on the continent. Officials say 25 million adults have received their first dose in the first 100 days of the vaccination program, and 1.7 million have had their second jab.

Hancock said the U.K. is on track to offer a first dose to all those in the top priority groups and to over-50s by mid-April.

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