

'Best thing I've done': First person to get COVID jab is still beaming

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It was the shot in the arm that made history: in December last year British grandmother Margaret Keenan became the first person in the Western world to get an approved coronavirus vaccine, kicking off a

global campaign to end the pandemic.

Now, close to one billion people around the world have received COVID jabs—both first and second doses—and Keenan said she is proud to have been the first.

"It really is the best thing I've ever done," the former jewellery shop owner said.

She got her shot on December 8—just a week before her 91st birthday—and says she is now looking forward to going on holiday, after only retiring four years ago.

She also hopes her inaugural vaccine will inspire others to follow in her steps.

"I just feel really honoured to have had it done, to have been the first and to have got the ball rolling," Keenan said this week during a call with the state-run National Health Service (NHS).

"I'm telling everyone to go and get it... I hope everyone comes forward."

She got her first dose less than a week after UK regulators became the first in the world to approve the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine for general use, and has since had her second.

Britain has now approved several other jabs, and an army of health officials and volunteers have now administered nearly 45 million doses—one of the most successful efforts globally.

'Dawn is coming'

Keenan praised the NHS for its pivotal role in the UK's vaccine rollout,

calling its efforts "incredible" and the cherished institution "wonderful".

Medics cheered and formed a guard of honour back in December after Keenan—wearing a festive Christmas T-shirt—got the first jab, administered by nurse May Parsons.

An NHS veteran of two decades originally from the Philippines, Parsons also spoke this week of her pride in helping Britain appear to turn a corner in the fight against COVID-19.

Following surging virus infections, hospitalisations and deaths earlier this year, months of stringent restrictions and the successful jabs drive have helped push the numbers back to levels not seen since last September.

"Vaccinating Maggie was a little spark of light in the midst of the darkness, and now I feel like the dawn is coming," she said.

"It's almost unbelievable that we've managed to roll out the vaccine so successfully.

"I'm really grateful to all my colleagues for the bravery and courage that they've shown throughout this pandemic, which has helped us care for our people and care for our patients like Maggie."

Britain is aiming to have offered a first [vaccine](#) dose to all adults by August.

Queen Elizabeth II, who turned 95 this week, and Prime Minister Boris Johnson are among those to have already received jabs.

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