

The last steps are the hardest

This month, we're asking you to write to the new DFID Minister Dr. Andrew Murrison, asking for a strong pledge to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, as part of the UK's commitment to delivering health for all. These talking points should help you explain why this investment is needed to protect all children with polio vaccines in some of the hardest-to-reach places, as a vital part of ensuring health for all.

Talking points

- Humanity is on the verge of eradicating polio, a crippling disease of childhood. We are 99.9% of the way to eradicating the virus, but if we don't finish the job, polio will come back.
- Despite this incredible progress, we have yet to stop transmission of the virus in the most difficult-to-reach parts of the world. Finding even a single polio case shows that vaccination around the globe is still needed.
- But the last few steps will be the hardest. Missing just one village could let the virus survive and circulate viciously and quickly, undoing all the incredible achievements of the GPEI so far.
- There is no cure for polio, but it can be prevented with a simple vaccine. Today, people around the world are working to reach every last child with vaccines to keep them safe. The GPEI vaccinates over 400 million children against polio every year.
- Health workers, often women, make difficult journeys to affected areas, work with local leaders, and go house to house to ensure every child gets the vaccinations they need. Encouragement and support from trusted people in communities helps build confidence in the importance of the polio vaccine.
- Without the GPEI, more than 17 million people who are currently healthy would have been paralysed by the virus.
- The UK has been a leader in supporting global eradication efforts so far. A global Britain must remain a leader in polio eradication efforts in order to ensure this virus is eliminated and we achieve SDG 3, ensuring no one is left behind.

See also our handy leaflet on [achieving universal health coverage](#).

Don't forget to **let the Campaigns team know that you've taken action** by emailing Dela at dela.anderson@results.org.uk.

Case study: Vaccine heroes protect every child



Source: The Global Polio Eradication Initiative

Everyday people in Pakistan are advocating for vaccinations. A legion of supporters across neighbourhoods, schools, and households are creating a groundswell of support for one of the most successful and cost-effective health interventions in history: vaccination. These are everyday heroes in Pakistan’s fight against polio.

In this picture, Gulbashra marks the door of a house where the children have been vaccinated, with her mother-in-law supporting her. She says:

“My mother-in-law often helps me out. She has very good communication skills despite being illiterate, and while I vaccinate children she engages the mothers and even men, if they are home, when there is a refusal. After struggling over the last three years, our community now accepts vaccination, and we are mobilising them for routine immunisation.”

Thousands of brave individuals like Gulbashra are championing polio vaccine within their communities to enlist the majority in the pursuit of protecting the minority — reaching the last 5% of missed children in Pakistan.

One of the major factors that determines whether a child will receive vaccinations is the parents’ receptiveness to immunisation. The decision to vaccinate is a complex interplay of cultural, religious and political factors. By educating caregivers and answering their questions, these ‘vaccine heroes’ serve as powerful advocates for vaccination, creating demand where previously there might have been hesitation. They are everyday people vouching for vaccination as a basic health right.

See [these case studies](#) from the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, and [this story](#) from the BBC on polio eradication efforts in Pakistan.