

COVID-19 Vaccination Update 10.11.21

From Ffion Johnstone – West Area Director

We have now administered a booster jab to 120,516 people. This represents 33.7 per cent of those who will become eligible over the course of the programme.

Booster jabs are being given at a rate of around 3,000 per day and we remain committed to inviting 90 per cent of those eligible by mid-December.

Booster appointments are being sent by post in chronological order at least six months after the date the second dose was given, not necessarily from the oldest to the youngest.

Six months is simply the minimum qualifying gap between the second dose and the booster. If it has been more than six months since your second dose, you are not 'overdue' and there is no need to contact the health board or your GP Practice as we will automatically invite you as soon as it is your turn.

Our teams are working flat out to get jabs into people's arms as quickly and as safely as possible and we thank people for their patience and understanding as we work through this hugely challenging task.

Please remember that answers to Frequently Asked Questions can be found on our website [here](#).

Moderna vaccine

From next week onwards we will begin using the Moderna vaccine.

Like Pfizer, Moderna is an mRNA vaccine, and it has been safely administered to millions of people across the UK and around the world.

Moderna has been approved by the UK regulator, the Medicine and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), as a safe and highly effective vaccine for people aged 12 and over.

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has also recommended its use, noting in particular that mRNA vaccines provide a strong booster effect, regardless of what vaccine was administered for a first or second dose.

At this stage, Moderna will only be offered in our COVID-19 Vaccination Centres.

Because the Moderna vaccine has similar transportation, storage and preparation requirements to the Pfizer vaccine, it will not be possible for many GP Practices to administer it.

For further information on COVID-19 vaccines, please visit the [Public Health Wales website](#).

Drop in clinics for those aged 12-15

An up-to-date list of drop in clinics to allow those aged 12-15 to receive a first dose is available on our website [here](#).

First and second doses

It's not too late to come forward for a first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. It's also vitally important that those who have had their first dose receive their second, eight weeks later, in order to receive the very best protection.

First and second doses can only be booked through our COVID-19 Vaccination Contact Centre telephone number: [03000 840004](tel:03000840004). The lines are open Monday to Friday, 8am to 7pm and Saturday to Sunday, 9am to 2pm. Lines can be very busy, so please be patient.

Third doses for those who are immunosuppressed

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) have previously announced that individuals who are immunosuppressed should receive a third primary dose of vaccination.

We have been working closely with clinicians to identify relevant individuals and determine whether a third or booster dose needs to be administered at a specific point within their treatment cycles, or whether there is a need to delay medication in order to ensure the greatest positive immune response to the vaccine.

The majority of those identified do not need specific timing and they will receive a letter of appointment for their third primary dose.

If they have already had a booster, this will be amended on their record to a third primary dose and they will be invited for a booster at least six months later.

We are continuing to work closely with our clinicians to invite those that require a specific timing, based on their treatment and/or medication schedule.

Recruitment

We are continually looking to recruit new staff and we have had a very positive response to our latest recruitment drive, with hundreds of people expressing an interest in joining our teams.

You can find [further information on our website](#), including details of how to join our latest online recruitment events.

Vaccination venues

We'd love to offer a COVID-19 Vaccination Centre in every town and village in North Wales in order to reduce the distance people have to travel to receive their booster jab.

However, we are unable to do this for the following reasons:

- Our workforce to administer jabs has reduced by around 50 per cent compared to the initial rollout. This is largely because [fewer GP Practices are able to take part](#) due to unprecedented demand facing primary care, and the handling requirements of the Pfizer vaccine
- The requirement from the JCVI to move from the AstraZeneca vaccine to Pfizer and Moderna has increased appointment lengths by 400 per cent to 20+ minutes, due to the need for a 15 observation period after the dose is received
- Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines have a short usage window and very specific transportation, storage and preparation requirements, which adds to the complexities of delivering these vaccines across multiple sites

Because we are working with fewer staff, longer appointment times and very specific vaccine handling requirements, it is vital that we use the reduced resources we have effectively, in order to vaccinate those in priority groups as quickly as possible.

We are [continuing to work very hard to recruit additional staff](#) as well as using our existing workforce to deliver vaccines as close to people's homes as we possibly can. We are also currently investigating the use of mobile units, which will enable us to hold pop-up clinics.

We recognise that this is not a perfect situation and we really appreciate people's patience and understanding.

All of our COVID-19 Vaccination sites are on public transport routes and we are currently exploring how we can improve community transport provision for certain eligible groups.

For up to date public transport timetables please visit the [Traveline Cymru website](#) or call their bi-lingual Contact Centre on freephone 0800 464 0000, from 7am – 8pm daily.