# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **COVID-19 Vaccination – Progress against Strategy** |
| **DATE** | **22 March 2022** |
| **BY** | **Eluned Morgan MS, Minister for Health and Social Services** |

Today, I will publish the latest version of our [COVID-19 vaccination programme update](https://gov.wales/covid-19-vaccination-programme-updates).

We are now, once again, seeing a marked increase in cases of coronavirus. While the BA2 sub-type of the omicron variant of coronavirus is spreading quickly in all parts of Wales and in all age groups, we believe the clinical severity of BA2 is similar to the original variant of omicron, which thankfully for most people, will mean they will experience mild symptoms.

But we are watching the levels of illness in older people very carefully and there has been a spike in hospital admissions over the last couple of weeks.

Following the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) advice, we begun to roll out the spring boosters on the 12 March, with people aged 75 and over, older care home residents and people over 12 years who are immunosuppressed being invited for their vaccine. All health boards are beginning by vaccinating our most vulnerable in older care homes and who are housebound.

I strongly urge those who have not had their full course to come forward to receive their vaccine whether that is a primary dose or a booster. Health boards continue to have walk-in sessions for those aged 12 and over for people to come forward for both their primary dose and their booster dose. This is very important as the vaccine offers a high level of protection against the virus.

Health boards are also offering children aged five to 11 years their first vaccination. Parents and guardians will need to accompany the child and provide consent for each vaccine. You do not need to contact your health board unless you need to rebook your appointment. There is no age priority which makes it easier for eligible siblings to be vaccinated at the same time.

The JCVI has provided additional interim advice to ministers for the purposes of forward planning that an autumn booster is likely to be advised for people who are at higher risk of severe COVID-19. It remains too early to set out precise details of what that programme may look like, but the committee will provide more definitive advice in due course. In the meantime, our health boards are planning for this eventuality to ensure they are ready when the time comes.

The success of our vaccination programme has changed the course of the pandemic for the better. The vaccine is still a hugely important defence in our fight keep coronavirus under control and Keep Wales Safe.