



Ein cyf/Our ref:WQ90208

Rhys ab Owen
Senedd Regional Member South Wales Central

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3 January 2024

Dear Rhys

Thank you for your recent written question asking how I have been assisting the NHS in combating the increase in whooping cough cases.

There has recently been an increase in notifications of whooping cough, or pertussis, in Wales which has been reflected across other UK nations. We would expect to see peaks in cases every three to four years, with younger children particularly at risk should they become unwell.

The most effective method of controlling pertussis is by maintaining high levels of immunisation among vulnerable groups or whole populations. Vaccination is included in the 6-in-1 jab given to infants at two, three, and four months, as well as the 4-in-1 pre-school booster. Since 2012 the pertussis vaccination has also been routinely offered to all expectant mothers in Wales from week 16 of pregnancy in order to protect newborns until they are old enough to receive their routine vaccinations.

Public Health Wales undertakes routine surveillance to detect trends in certain diseases, as well as monitoring of vaccination uptake rates, and following up local cases and outbreaks to prevent further spread.

The most up-to-date quarterly data up to 30 September 2023 in Wales shows that uptake of the 6-in-1 vaccine stands at 93.8%, and the 4-in-1 pre-school booster at 89.2%. We know that some children fell behind on their routine immunisations during the pandemic. Under our childhood vaccinations awareness and engagement work we are encouraging parents to ensure their children are up to date with all their routine immunisations and to accept the offer of vaccination when their child reaches the appropriate age to protect against pertussis and other vaccine preventable diseases. We are also working with PHW and health boards to encourage pregnant women to take up the offer of a pertussis vaccine to ensure their newborn baby is protected.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. E. Morgan'.

Eluned Morgan AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services