# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TITLE**  | **Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation – Covid-19 autumn booster vaccination programme** |
| **DATE**  | **30 August 2023** |
| **BY** | **Eluned Morgan MS, Minister for Health and Social Services** |

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) is an [independent expert advisory committee](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fen.wikipedia.org%2Fwiki%2FNational_Immunization_Technical_Advisory_Group&data=05%7C01%7CChristopher.Jones%40gov.wales%7Cdc82d4d6c8c44f20d88108da63177ffc%7Ca2cc36c592804ae78887d06dab89216b%7C0%7C0%7C637931249816477220%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=%2FA7I7VS6fSDP%2BK%2FgUYOvRAIZForu5mpEFdnDAZ616Fw%3D&reserved=0), which advises United Kingdom health departments about [immunisation](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fen.wikipedia.org%2Fwiki%2FImmunisation&data=05%7C01%7CChristopher.Jones%40gov.wales%7Cdc82d4d6c8c44f20d88108da63177ffc%7Ca2cc36c592804ae78887d06dab89216b%7C0%7C0%7C637931249816477220%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=KSpiV5mYCzoB6PuMa6U5uvA6agex%2F9H38etE4to7M3o%3D&reserved=0), making recommendations about [vaccination schedules](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fen.wikipedia.org%2Fwiki%2FVaccination_schedule&data=05%7C01%7CChristopher.Jones%40gov.wales%7Cdc82d4d6c8c44f20d88108da63177ffc%7Ca2cc36c592804ae78887d06dab89216b%7C0%7C0%7C637931249816477220%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=u6flzlmCy6bQBtAGRyIHqyo6WQlPDDGURjWHZC%2B0Dlc%3D&reserved=0) and [vaccine](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fen.wikipedia.org%2Fwiki%2FVaccine&data=05%7C01%7CChristopher.Jones%40gov.wales%7Cdc82d4d6c8c44f20d88108da63177ffc%7Ca2cc36c592804ae78887d06dab89216b%7C0%7C0%7C637931249816477220%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=bm2HAtiN25lxFQ4C2dkaIMYlKzmwHCoFR%2BBOtb1NaqE%3D&reserved=0) safety.

Since my last statement on [eligibility](https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-joint-committee-vaccination-and-immunisation-final-advice-eligibility-covid-19), the JCVI has today published a [statement](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-autumn-2023-vaccination-programme-jcvi-update-7-july-2023) with its advice on which vaccines are to be used in the autumn Covid-19 booster programme. As ever, the primary aim of the Covid-19 vaccination programme is to boost immunity in those at higher risk from Covid-19 and to improve protection against severe illness, hospitalisation and death.

For autumn 2023, the JCVI is recommending:

* the use of both the approved bivalent Omicron BA4-5 mRNA and monovalent XBB vaccines (subject to licensure by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA))
* the latest Covid-19 variant vaccines which are available should be prioritised for use in persons at higher individual clinical risk of severe Covid-19.

Eligible individuals will be given the most appropriate vaccine depending on their age and clinical risk.

In addition, the Committee advises:

* vaccines should be offered at least 3 months after the previous vaccine dose, although operational flexibility may be applied.
* where substantial delays might be incurred in deploying the latest UK approved Covid-19 vaccine by December, the principle of timeliness should take priority over the choice of vaccine.
* where operationally expedient, Covid-19 and influenza vaccines may be given concurrently.

The Welsh Government continues to be guided by the latest clinical and scientific evidence and advice. Therefore, along with my UK counterparts, I have accepted this advice.

In accordance with the principle that timeliness should take priority over vaccine choice, and in the light of the recent emergence of a new variant of concern (BA.2.86), The roll-out of Wales’ winter respiratory vaccination programme will begin on 11 September and prioritise the protection of those groups most at risk. The programme will commence with the vaccination of care home residents using existing vaccine stock. Planning in Wales by NHS organisations is well advanced to prepare for the autumn programme and appointments will issue in the next few weeks.

Our approach for the winter respiratory vaccination programme will ensure that people who are [eligible](https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2023-06/the-national-influenza-immunisation-programme-2023-24.pdf) are also protected from seasonal flu. Timely boosting has been advised by the JCVI to increase and update protection over the winter and we urge people to come forward for both these vaccines when offered. It is the best way to protect yourselves and your families and to keep Wales safe this winter.

I am extremely grateful to the NHS and everyone involved in the vaccination programme for their continued hard work.

This statement is being issued during recess in order to keep members informed. Should members wish me to make a further statement or to answer questions on this when the Senedd returns I would be happy to do so.