# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) advice on vaccine products for the autumn Covid-19 vaccination programme** |
| **DATE** | **15 August 2022** |
| **BY** | **Eluned Morgan MS, Minister for Health and Social Services** |

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has today provided a statement with advice on the vaccine products for the autumn Covid-19 vaccination programme.

The emergence of variants has led to the development of variant vaccines, with the objective of attaining a better match in vaccine-induced immunity against circulating strains. Vaccines that contain two different antigens, each based on a different SARS-CoV2 strain, are termed bivalent vaccines. Bivalent vaccines may therefore potentially improve protection against some variants of SARS-CoV2.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) recently granted approval of the Moderna mRNA bivalent vaccine on 12 August. The JCVI is now recommending the initial deployment of this bivalent vaccine which targets the original Wuhan strain and the Omicron variant for use as a single booster dose in the autumn campaign, and the use of other mRNA bivalent vaccines, if and when approved. Their advice is summarised as follows:

* Timeliness and simplicity are key aspects in the deployment of the autumn programme.
* Bivalent vaccines have been found to offer a small advantage over normal vaccine and therefore should be used in the Autumn 2022 campaign.
* Should significant constraint arise regarding supply or deployment, priority for vaccination should focus on the higher clinical risk groups.
  + Autumn booster should be offered at least 3 months after the previous dose

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 and the roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccination programme will begin at the start of September 2022.

Our Winter Respiratory Vaccination Strategy will ensure that people who are eligible are also protected from seasonal flu and we urge people to also take up the flu vaccine when offered.

This programme will help boost the immunity of those at higher risk from COVID-19, improving their protection against severe illness and to protect the NHS over winter 2022-23.

Appointments will begin to issue to those eligible from this week, and I encourage everyone to take up the offer of a Covid-19 booster when received. 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.