# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Ending of the COVID-19 vaccine primary and booster dose universal offers** |
| **DATE**  | **16 February 2023** |
| **BY** | **Eluned Morgan MS, Minister for Health and Social Services** |

In my statement on 25th January 2023, I confirmed that I had accepted the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) recommendations for changes to the universal ‘nobody left behind’ offer for the COVID-19 vaccination programme. I can now provide more detail on the operational implications in Wales of that announcement.

Due to the high level of strong population immunity developed over the past two and a half years, and as we move from a pandemic emergency response towards a more sustainable, business as usual approach:

* The offer of the initial two dose **universal primary course** of vaccine, that was offered from December 2020 to all the population aged over 5, **will cease on 30th June 2023**
* The offer of the **universal booster** (third) dose, offered from autumn 2021 to all the population aged over 5, **will cease on 31st March 2023**

This means that those aged 5 to 49, who have not had their primary course or their 2021 booster dose, have until those dates to take up these offers.

This does not signal a closure of the COVID-19 vaccination programme, we expect COVID­-19 vaccination to continue to be a feature of our vaccination programme in Wales. People who develop a new health condition that places them in a clinical risk group, who haven’t yet had their primary course and/or booster dose, will still be able to be vaccinated during the next campaign window or sooner on the advice of a clinician.

Additionally, as previously announced, people at higher risk (as determined by the JCVI) will be offered an additional booster in Autumn 2023 and planning is also currently underway for a possible Spring 2023 booster programme, subject to advice shortly from the JCVI on this.

The vaccine continues to be the best way to prevent serious illness and the spread of COVID-19 and I would urge everyone eligible who has not yet had their primary course or their original 2021 booster dose to come forward before these universal offers end.