# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **COVID-19 Vaccination – JCVI announcement Autumn booster programme** |
| **DATE** | **14 September 2021** |
| **BY** | **Eluned Morgan, Minister for Health and Social Services** |

Today, the Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation has published its final advice on the next stage of the COVID-19 Vaccination programme – the Autumn Booster campaign. This provides us with the much needed clarity to progress to the next phase. I would like to thank the JCVI for their advice. I have accepted this advice, so Wales will begin deployment of the Booster programme from next week.

Some months ago, the JCVI was asked whether a campaign should be launched to give people a booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, as a result of emerging evidence of reduced immunity over time. Following weeks of discussion and consideration of evidence, the JCVI has provided its final advice, which recommends the autumn booster campaign for certain groups; its purpose being to reduce any further incidence of Covid-19 and maximise protection in those who are most vulnerable to serious infection, ahead of the winter months.

In their final advice, the JCVI recommends that individuals who were eligible and received vaccination in Phase 1 of the COVID-19 vaccination programme (priority groups 1-9) should be offered a third dose COVID-19 booster vaccine with a minimum 6-month interval after the 2nd dose. An mRNA vaccine is recommended (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna) irrespective of which vaccine was given as a primary dose.

The single priority group lists:

* Those living in residential care homes for older adults
* All adults aged 50 years or over
* Frontline health and social care workers
* All those aged 16 to 49 years with underlying health conditions that put them at higher risk of severe COVID-19 (as set out in the Green Book), and adult carers
* Adult household contacts of immunosuppressed individuals

As most younger adults will only receive their second COVID-19 vaccine dose in late summer, the benefits of booster vaccination in this group will be considered at a later time, by the JCVI, when more information is available.

There may be opportunities to offer for the COVID-19 vaccine and flu vaccine to be co-administered, but this is only where timing and logistics allow.

We have been planning for an autumn booster with health boards over the summer months. I am confident our NHS is ready to deliver this and we will start next week by offering a Booster vaccine to people living and working in care homes and frontline health and social care staff.

It is important that those eligible under the JCVI advice receive a booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, when they are called for an appointment, as there is the possibility of reduced immunity of their previous doses over time.

The vaccine continues to be the best way to prevent serious illness and the spread of COVID-19 and every eligible adult is urged to take-up both doses when asked and a booster dose, if eligible.