



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1116  
Ein cyf/Our ref VG/09986/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS  
Chair, Petitions Committee

28 January 2021

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 16 December concerning Petition No. P-05-1116 about Prioritising People with Learning Disabilities for the COVID-19 Vaccine.

Wales in line with the other UK nations is vaccinating people who are most at-risk of catching coronavirus and developing serious illnesses first, in line with the recommendations from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). They have recommended the vaccine be offered to in the first instance to care home residents and health and social care workers, alongside people aged 80 and over. More information on how they reached their conclusions and details on at-risk groups (including those who have been shielding and/or have underlying health conditions) can be found at this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/priority-groups-for-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-advice-from-the-jcvi-2-december-2020>

This approach will help ensure those at the highest risk are protected as soon as possible. It is estimated that, taken together, the priority groups recommended by the JCVI represent around 99% of preventable mortality from COVID-19.

The JCVI have recommended that those individuals aged 16 years to 64 years with underlying health conditions, which put them at higher risk of serious disease and mortality should feature as cohort 6 in the priority list. This includes those suffering from a severe and profound learning disability.

Health boards are increasing capacity now that foundations have been laid and they have up scaled their delivery since the COVID-19 vaccination programme started in December. Daily vaccination rates are increasing across Wales and all health boards are geared up for significant expansion in capacity during January, with the coming on-stream of the AstraZeneca vaccine.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Much more flexible and mobile deployment models can be used now that the AstraZeneca vaccine has been given regulatory approval for use in the UK, for example, health boards will be able to provide more clinics in primary care settings, like GP practices and pharmacies. There is a huge amount of work ongoing across Wales to vaccinate people as quickly as possible and subject to supply, we are aiming to vaccinate all those people in cohorts 1-9 by the spring.

Individuals will be sent appointment letters with details of the location where they will receive the vaccination, dependent on where they are on the schedule and risk. There will be no need to apply for or ask GPs or pharmacists for the vaccination, as invitation will be done automatically.

Further information about the vaccination programme can be found as follows:

- The Welsh Government's recent written statement about vaccine deployment in Wales: <https://gov.wales/written-statement-covid-19-vaccine-strategy>
- FAQs about Covid-19 vaccines: <https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/immunisation-and-vaccines/covid-19-vaccination-information/about-the-vaccine/>

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vaughan Gething". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Vaughan Gething AS/MS**

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