

Rebecca Evans AC/AM
Gweinidog Iechyd y Cyhoedd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Social Services and Public Health



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-693
Ein cyf/Our ref RE/05275/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair – Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
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SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

9 August 2016

Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport, seeking his views about the petition raised by Rhian Cecil regarding the age range of children receiving the meningitis B (MenB) vaccine in NHS Wales. I am responding as Minister for Social Services and Public Health.

Meningococcal infection is a very distressing disease and I appreciate parents' concerns and their understandable wish to protect their children.

The Welsh Government's immunisation programmes, along with those of the other UK countries, are based on independent expert advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). When any new immunisation programme is introduced, expert advice assists governments to set the criteria that determine eligibility.

The MenB vaccine protects against the "B" strain of meningococcal disease. A new MenB vaccination programme was introduced on 1 September 2015 for those babies who were born on, or after, 1 July 2015, with a catch-up programme for those born from 1 May 2015 who would have missed their first dose. The UK is the first country to offer routine MenB vaccination. As more babies are immunised, it is expected the incidence of the disease will reduce.

For MenB, the JCVI advised that the vaccination should aim to protect babies before they reach five months of age because this is when the risk is greatest. Babies are offered a course of three doses at two, four and 12 to 13 months.

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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.

The JCVI monitors all vaccination programmes closely and reviews regularly the scientific evidence on their impact and benefits. Any further advice received from the JCVI on extending our national programmes against the effects of meningococcal infection will be given due consideration by the Welsh Government.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rebecca".

Rebecca Evans AC/AM

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