

Letter from Health Boards to householders

2020 was a very difficult year for everyone.

So many of us have lost family members and close friends to coronavirus.

All of us have had our lives turned upside down by the pandemic.

The situation in Wales is very serious at the moment. Cases of the virus are very high and there is a new, very transmissible strain of coronavirus in the UK, circulating in all parts of Wales.

We are all staying at home again to stay safe, save lives and to protect the NHS.

But there is a glimmer of hope for us all.

You may have heard that two new Covid-19 vaccines are now available. This is the good news we have been waiting for. It hopefully means we can begin to look forward to a return to normal life in time.

More than 1.5 million people in Wales will get the vaccine in the first stage of roll out – but it will take time to protect everyone.

The people who are most at risk of catching coronavirus and developing serious illnesses will get the vaccine first. This includes people living in care homes; the over 80s and frontline health and care workers. (Please see the annex for more details of priority groups in first phase).

As the vaccine is rolled out, we all need to follow the safety rules and keep ourselves and our families safe.

To do this, we all need to meet as few people as possible, wash our hands regularly, wear a face covering and keep our distance from others.

We all hope the vaccine will lead to a better and brighter 2021 and an end to this pandemic.

How the vaccination is being made available

We now have two types of Covid-19 vaccine available – one made by Pfizer-BioNTech and one developed by Oxford-AstraZeneca.

In the first 3 weeks since the first vaccine became available, more than 35,000 people across Wales received the jab.

A huge amount of work has gone into planning the massive effort needed to provide everyone eligible with a Covid-19 vaccine.

As more supplies of the vaccines are delivered, the pace will now increase and more clinics will be set up during January. More than 60 GP practices will be running special vaccination clinics this month.

You will be invited to have the vaccine when it's your turn. You can choose whether to have the vaccine or not. You will receive information about the jab to help you make up your mind if you have any concerns.

More information is available at: <https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/immunisation-and-vaccines/covid-19-vaccination-information/about-the-vaccine>

Getting your vaccination appointment

You will receive an invitation when you are due for your vaccination. It will include details of where to go to receive it.

You don't need to apply for an appointment – **please don't contact your GP, health board, hospital or local authority about an appointment.** Please let them focus on their important work.

Everyone will get two doses of the vaccine but you will have a high level of protection after the first dose. You will be called back for your second dose within 12 weeks of the first.

When you have your Covid-19 vaccine, you will get a credit card-sized NHS Wales immunisation card. This will act as a reminder about your second dose and will also have information about how to report any side effects.

Annex 1

The priority list to receive the vaccine has been agreed by the UK's independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) and is being followed by all four nations in the UK.

There are two phases:

In the first phase, we will vaccinate according to age and risk of serious illness if someone catches coronavirus.

This priority list is as follows:

1. People living in a care home for older adults and their staff carers
2. All those 80 years of age and older and frontline health and social care workers
3. All those 75 years of age and over
4. All those 70 years of age and over and people who are extremely clinically vulnerable (also known as the "shielding" group) – people in this group will previously have received a letter from the Chief Medical Officer advising them to shield
5. All those 65 years of age and over
6. All individuals aged 16 years to 64 years with underlying health conditions*, which put them at higher risk of serious disease and mortality
7. All those 60 years of age and over
8. All those 55 years of age and over
9. All those 50 years of age and over

These groups represent around 99% of preventable deaths from Covid.

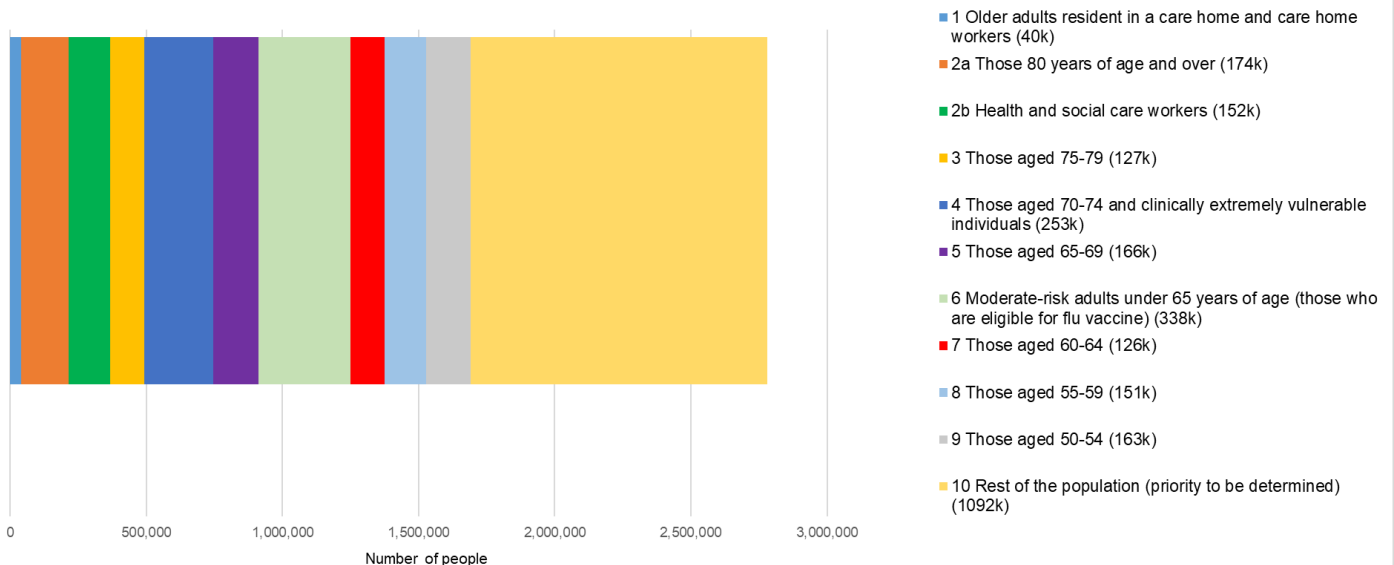
*Underlying health conditions:

- Chronic respiratory disease, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), cystic fibrosis and severe asthma

- Chronic heart disease (and vascular disease)
- Chronic kidney disease
- Chronic liver disease
- Chronic neurological disease including epilepsy
- Down's syndrome
- Severe and profound learning disability
- Diabetes
- Solid organ, bone marrow and stem cell transplant recipients
- People with specific cancers
- Immunosuppression due to disease or treatment
- Asplenia and splenic dysfunction
- Morbid obesity
- Severe mental illness

In the second phase, further recommendations are awaited from JCVI and we hope the rest of the population in Wales will be vaccinated. The advice from the JCVI is that the focus for this first phase should be on preventing further hospital admissions and vaccinating those people who are at increased risk first.

Size of Each Priority Group



Note that there is some double counting of residential populations and health and social care workers with other groups.