

WELSH HEALTH CIRCULAR



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Issue Date: 06/04/23

STATUS: ACTION / INFORMATION

CATEGORY: PUBLIC HEALTH

Title: COVID-19 vaccination of children aged 6 months to 4 years in a clinical risk group

Date of Expiry/Review: Not applicable

For Action by:

Chief Executives, Health Boards/Trusts
Immunisation Leads, Health Boards/Trusts
Immunisation Coordinators, Health Boards
COVID-19 Vaccination Leads, Health Boards/Trusts
Medical Directors, Health Boards/Trusts
Directors of Primary Care, Health Boards/Trusts
Nurse Executive Directors, Health Boards/Trusts
Chief Pharmacists, Health Boards/Trusts
Directors of Public Health, Health Boards/Trusts
Executive Director of Public Health, Public Health Wales
Head Vaccine Preventable Disease Programme, Public Health Wales
Director of Planning, NHS Wales Delivery Unit
Community Pharmacy Wales
General Practitioner Council, Wales
General practitioners
Community pharmacists

Sender: Dr Frank Atherton, Chief Medical Officer / Medical Director NHS Wales

HSSG Welsh Government Contact(s):

Vaccination Division, Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff CF10 3NQ
Email: wg.vaccinationsprogrammteam@gov.wales

Dear Colleague,

The Welsh Government has accepted the latest advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), which recommended the vaccination for COVID 19 of children aged 6 months to 4 years in a clinical risk group (as defined in the Green Book).

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, studies have shown that children are much less likely to develop severe COVID-19 disease than older adults. For the vast majority of children, SARS-CoV-2 infection is associated with no, or mild, symptoms. However, for a smaller proportion of children with pre-existing health conditions, the risk of severe illness is greater. The odds of admission to Paediatric Intensive Care Units (PICUs) with severe COVID-19 is over seven-fold greater for infants and young children with underlying medical conditions compared to those without underlying medical conditions.

Therefore, the JCVI has advised that:

- Children aged 6 months to 4 years in a clinical risk group (as defined in the Green Book) should be offered two 3-microgram doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine (Comirnaty®) with an interval of at least 8 weeks between the first and second doses. The minimum interval between any vaccine dose and recent SARS-CoV-2 infection should be four weeks.

This letter is aimed at health professionals who are responsible for commissioning and delivering the COVID-19 vaccination programme in Wales. We encourage you to share this guidance with all those involved in delivering the programme in your area.

Programme start date

Health Boards will start to invite eligible children for vaccination in May 2023. The primary course should be offered at intervals outlined in the Green Book.

Finance

Health boards and Trusts have previously been advised of their budget allocations for COVID-19 vaccination during 2023-24 via a letter from Sioned Rees, Director of Health Protection.

Delivery

Vaccination Programme Wales provides the planning and delivery oversight for all vaccination programmes in Wales. It will confirm the operational framework for delivery of vaccination for COVID 19 of children aged 6 months to 4 years in a clinical risk group.

I would like to take this opportunity again, to thank everyone involved for their hard work to continue to deliver the COVID-19 vaccination programme. Your support in delivering the programme helps to ensure the people of Wales are protected and safeguarded. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Sir Frank Atherton
Chief Medical Officer / Medical Director NHS Wales