

WELSH HEALTH CIRCULAR



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Issue Date: 10 May 2023

STATUS: ACTION / INFORMATION

CATEGORY: PUBLIC HEALTH

Title: Implementing the move to one dose of the HPV vaccine in Wales

Date of Expiry / Review N/A

For Action by:

Immunisation Leads, Health Boards/Trusts
School nurses, Health Boards/Trusts
Clinical Leads, Sexual Health, Health Boards
Chief Executives, Health Boards/Trusts
Medical Directors, Health Boards/Trusts
Directors of Primary Care, Health Boards/Trusts
Nurse Executive Directors, Health Boards/Trusts
Directors of Public Health, Health Boards
Chief Executive, Public Health Wales
Executive Director of Public Health Services, Public Health Wales
Nurse Director, Public Health Wales
Head of Vaccine Preventable Disease Programme, Public Health Wales
Head of Sexual Health Programme, Public Health Wales
Digital Health Care Wales
Director of Planning, Vaccination Programme Wales
General Practitioners
General Practitioners Council Wales

For information to:

Directors of Workforce and Organisational Development, Health Boards/Trusts
Finance Directors, Health Boards/Trusts
Directors of Primary, Community and Mental Health, Health Boards/Trusts
Chief Pharmacists, Health Boards/Trusts
Chief Executive, Welsh Local Government Association,
Health Education Improvement Wales

Sender:

Sir Frank Atherton, Chief Medical Officer/Medical Director NHS Wales

HSSG Welsh Government Contact(s) :

Vaccination Division, Health and Social Services Group, Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff. CF10 3NQ Email: wg.vaccinationsprogrammefteam@gov.wales

Dear Colleague,

I wrote to you on 9th September 2022 regarding changes to the vaccine for the human papillomavirus (HPV) immunisation programme: [Changes to the vaccine for the HPV immunisation programme \(WHC/2022/023\) | GOV.WALES](#)

Further to this, I am now writing to provide information on how these changes will be implemented and is aimed at health professionals who are responsible for delivering the programme. I encourage you to share this information with all those who are involved in delivering the national HPV vaccination programme in your area.

Change to the vaccine schedule

As previously advised, a move to a one-dose schedule for the HPV vaccination programme has been recommended by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) for the routine adolescent programme and gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM) under 25: [JCVI statement on a one-dose schedule for the routine HPV immunisation programme - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Gardasil@9 vaccine will continue to be used for the HPV programme. The eligibility and schedule of the programme is:

- a one-dose schedule for the routine adolescent programme* and GBMSM programme for those vaccinated before their 25th birthday
- a two-dose schedule from the age of 25 in the GBMSM programme where vaccination is commenced on or after the individual's 25th birthday
- a three-dose schedule for individuals who are immunosuppressed and those known to be HIV-positive

*Catch up for the routine adolescent programme is up to the age of 25 for: girls born after 1 September 1991; and boys born after 1 September 2006. Therefore, those eligible for catch up in the routine programme will also only require one dose.

Implementing the new dosing schedule (one-dose only) in Wales

The move to a one-dose only schedule for the routine adolescent programme and GBMSM programme before their 25th birthday will be implemented under a 'hard stop' approach from 1st September 2023.

Until the one dose schedule commences, the current 2 dose schedule will remain in place.

From 1st September 2023, immunocompetent adolescents and eligible adults under 25 years of age (including GBMSM) who have received one dose of HPV vaccine will be considered fully vaccinated against HPV and will not need any additional doses.

Some parents, young people and GBMSM under 25 years of age may already have consented to a two-dose HPV schedule and may expect the offer of two doses to be honoured. **There will need to be clear communication to parents, eligible adolescents and young adults that the JCVI has [advised](#) that the evidence now**

shows only one dose of HPV vaccine is needed to give a high level of protection.

This advice is supported by the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization (SAGE) whose [2022 review](#) concluded that a single-dose HPV vaccine delivers solid protection against HPV to immunocompetent individuals under 25 years of age, that is comparable to 2-dose schedule. The Committee will continue to keep its advice under close review and take appropriate action where necessary.

GBMSM who are aged 25 years and over and those who are immunosuppressed or HIV-positive should continue to be offered the appropriate schedule as detailed above.

The move to routine delivery of a one-dose schedule highlights the effectiveness of HPV vaccination and the continuing role of the programme in saving lives and preventing future severe outcomes.

It is important however, that this good news does not translate into a picture of widening inequalities in HPV vaccination uptake, through reduced opportunities to catch-up. Health boards should ensure that there is a clearly commissioned (internal or external) pathway to vaccination for individuals who do not attend school or have missed sessions in school, and that this pathway is clearly communicated to parents and adolescents. HPV vaccination has had success in combating HPV and reducing cancers. The move to one-dose will minimise disruption for schools and release capacity. This capacity should be utilised to improve vaccine uptake levels and reduce inequalities.

Health Boards should focus on strengthening the programme delivery, across all academic years, striving to achieve 90% uptake by the time individuals reach 15 years of age.

The dosage change for the adolescent programme will be communicated via the school nursing service and primary care. The change to the GBMSM programme will be communicated via sexual health clinics.

NHS oversight and assurance of vaccination programme planning and delivery is through Vaccination Programme Wales. The Vaccination Programme Wales Team will work with Health boards and Trusts on the changes outlined in this circular, whilst Public Health Wales will continue to provide the specialist expert vaccination advice.

Further detailed information and guidance can be found in *Annex A*.

I would like to take this opportunity again, to thank everyone involved for their hard work to continue to deliver the HPV immunisation programme during what continues to be a challenging time for our services.

Yours sincerely,

Sir Frank Atherton
Chief Medical Officer / Medical Director NHS Wales

Annex A

Programme ambition

The primary aim of the HPV vaccination programme is to reach the highest level of population protection and vaccine coverage among girls and boys before they reach the age of 15 years. As part of their Global Strategy towards the Elimination of Cervical Cancer, the WHO's target is that by 2030, 90% of girls will be fully vaccinated with HPV vaccine by 15 years of age: [Cervical Cancer Elimination Initiative \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int/initiative/cervical-cancer-elimination)

In Wales, we recognise this target of 90% uptake for both girls and boys as a core performance measure of the routine adolescent programme.

Sexual Health Services should continue to ensure eligible GBMSM individuals are made aware of all vaccines available to them.

Supply

The vaccine for the HPV programme will continue to be ordered and supplied in the usual way via ImmForm. The move to one dose poses a risk to vaccine wastage due to committed volumes prior to the advised change. Achieving an uptake target of at least 90% helps to mitigate this risk of vaccine waste. To further mitigate waste, health boards should continue with their targeted catch-up programmes for those who did not receive immunisations as scheduled.

Funding

Funding for the HPV vaccination programme is contained within health boards' core allocation, with additional funding made available in 2021-22 to cover the increased cost associated with the introduction of the Gardasil®9 vaccine. Funding allocations to cover the increased vaccine cost will be revised based on the one-dose schedule, which will be issued shortly via a separate letter. There will be no changes to funding for any other aspect of the programme.

A catch up National Enhanced Specification (NES) is available for GPs to use to vaccinate individuals who have not been vaccinated in school but are under 25 years old.

The Green Book and guidance for healthcare practitioners

The Green Book, "*Immunisation against infectious disease*" provides guidance to healthcare practitioners on immunisation. The HPV chapter will be updated ready for the change to the programme and can be found at:

[Human papillomavirus \(HPV\): the green book, chapter 18a - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/human-papillomavirus-hpv-the-green-book-chapter-18a)

The HPV vaccination: guidance for healthcare practitioners document will also be updated and can be found here:

[HPV vaccination: guidance for healthcare practitioners - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/hpv-vaccination-guidance-for-healthcare-practitioners)

Information resources

Public Health Wales developed a suite of resources to support the current HPV vaccination programme. To support and facilitate the change to one dose, resources will be developed to assist professionals involved in the delivery of the HPV vaccination programme and inform those who are eligible to receive the vaccine.

Professionals:

Information for healthcare professionals on the HPV vaccination programme, including training resources, are currently available and will be updated for the change to the programme:

phw.nhs.wales/vaccines-professionals

icc.gig.cymru/brechlynnau-proffesiynol

Updated frequently asked questions for professionals on HPV will be available here:

[Frequently asked questions \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Public:

Updated bilingual leaflets, posters and record cards will be available to order for free from Health Information Resources here:

[Health Information Resources - Public Health Wales \(nhs.wales\)](#)

[Adnoddau Gwybodaeth Iechyd - Iechyd Cyhoeddus Cymru \(gig.cymru\)](#)

Accessible formats of leaflets including: Large print; Easy read; British sign language; and Audio will be available here:

phw.nhs.wales/vaccines/accessible-information

icc.gig.cymru/brechlynnau/adnoddau-hygyrch

The public facing PHW HPV vaccine website will be updated in due course to reflect the change to the programme. The page is available here:

phw.nhs.wales/HPVvaccine

icc.gig.cymru/brechlynHPV

Training

To support and facilitate the change to one dose, training resources will be developed to assist professionals involved in the delivery of the HPV vaccination programme.

Adolescent and GBMSM programme slide sets will be available here:

[Immunisation training resources and events - Public Health Wales \(nhs.wales\)](#)

[Adnoddau a digwyddiadau hyfforddiant imiwneiddio - Iechyd Cyhoeddus Cymru \(gig.cymru\)](#)

Patient Group Directions (PGDs)

The currently approved schedule for HPV vaccine is a two-dose course. Use of a single dose is therefore off-label. In line with advice from the MHRA, where authoritative advice and current practice supports the use of a medicine outside the terms of its licence, it is not always necessary to draw attention to this when seeking consent.

PGD links and supporting content will be available prior to the change of the HPV vaccination programme, and should be reviewed, ratified, and authorised locally by the health board/trust for local use.

[Patient Group Directions \(PGDs\) and Protocols Landing Page - Public Health Wales \(nhs.wales\)](#)

[Cyfarwyddiadau Grwpiau Cleifion \(PGDs\) a Tudalen Glanio Protocolau - Iechyd Cyhoeddus Cymru \(gig.cymru\)](#)

Surveillance

Public Health Wales will continue to conduct surveillance of HPV vaccine coverage, through the Welsh COVER reporting scheme, utilising data from the National Community Child Health Database (which is composed of data provided through the Child Health System in Wales – CYPrIS). To ensure that child health system data are kept as up to date as possible, those delivering opportunist catch-up doses of HPV vaccine are reminded to notify the appropriate health board child health office using an unscheduled immunisation form for vaccinations given up to the age of 19 years.

In addition to maintaining routine surveillance of HPV vaccination through quarterly and annual COVER reports, Public Health Wales will also support those delivering HPV vaccinations by developing school-level reporting for HPV. Longer term surveillance of HPV vaccination coverage equality and HPV vaccine effectiveness will also be developed, through data-linkage approaches where feasible.