

## Gwybodaeth Brechlyn COVID-19 Ym Mhowys

## Information about COVID-19 Vaccination in Powys

Update for Stakeholders - Issue 6, 15 February 2021

### Dear Colleagues

**Our COVID-19 vaccination programme has now reached 42,000 people (as at 3pm today), which includes 90% of people in Priority Groups 1-4 (people aged 70 and over, frontline health and care workers, adults who are “clinically extremely vulnerable”).**

I wanted to share my latest update as a video message so that it is widely available to people across Powys. So, you can read it below or watch online via our YouTube channel at <https://youtu.be/7UAKByxfBcY>



*Over 42,000 first dose vaccinations have been delivered in Powys*

A little over nine weeks ago we started the COVID-19 vaccination programme here in Powys. We started with huge enthusiasm to try to vaccinate as many people as quickly as possible. In particular it was important that we vaccinated those people who were most vulnerable and who had been outlined by the Government as being in the priority groups 1 to 4.

At the beginning of January, a key milestone of achieving an offer to everyone in those cohorts by the middle of February was set.

And today, as we reach the middle of February, I am delighted that we have indeed achieved that milestone. And I can also share that we have very nearly 90% coverage of that population.

More information about the COVID-19 vaccination programme in Powys is available from our website at: [www.pthb.nhs.wales/covid-vaccine](http://www.pthb.nhs.wales/covid-vaccine)

90% of the people in those cohorts have taken up that offer of a vaccination so far, and that is a tremendous achievement.

What's more, the total number of vaccines delivered has reached the 40,000 milestone here in Powys, and that is roughly 30% of the population having had their first dose.

Of course there is a second dose to come; but this achievement will help to show that we are able to deliver such a massive programme at very quick pace, and at scale right across Powys, and this is being delivered really successfully.

Even though we have the challenges of geography, of the winter, of snow, this has been a tremendous achievement.

I just want to thank everyone who has been part of delivering these vaccines; whether you have been at the frontline carrying out the injections, or whether you have been part of the huge and magnificent array of support that has been put in place to make this happen

I want to mention in particular:

- Powys Teaching Health Board staff, and primary care staff - the GPs right the way across Powys and their teams
- The voluntary sector - a huge number of volunteers have come and stood out in the dark and in cold, wet weather to support the community and to support this effort
- The military
- The Powys County Council colleagues – not just in telephony but right across a range of roles
- The Royal Welsh Agricultural Society and Freedom Leisure who have helped us with venues
- As well as Welsh Government who have made sure we have a good supply of vaccine

And of course, I want to thank the public. Because the public and our communities have again been tremendous in coming forward for the vaccine and sharing with us their absolute joy at receiving that little bit more protection from this virus.

I have been humbled by the efforts, by the messages of support, and by people going above and beyond to help collectively make this happen.

I am extremely grateful to everyone's efforts and I want to thank you sincerely on behalf of myself and the Board for everything that you have been doing.

We look forward to moving on to the next cohort, and making sure that everyone in the first cohorts has had their second vaccine.

And for those of you who are yet to have your first, that offer is still there and we will be in touch.

More information about the COVID-19 vaccination programme in Powys is available from our website at: [www.pthb.nhs.wales/covid-vaccine](http://www.pthb.nhs.wales/covid-vaccine)

## My key messages this week are:

- I remain so grateful for the support of our staff, volunteers, partner organisations, and the wider community across Powys for the incredible progress being made to deliver COVID-19 vaccination in the county.
- If you are invited to an appointment at a mass vaccination centre and you CAN attend then please DO attend, as this will help us to vaccinate as many people as possible as quickly as possible.
- If you are aged 70 and over, or you have one of the specific conditions that makes you “clinically extremely vulnerable” and have not received your invitation yet then please let us know.
- Invitations to people aged 65-69 (Priority Group 5) have begun. Around one third of people in this group have already been vaccinated. If you are aged 65-69 then you will receive your invitation soon.
- Planning is under way for people in Priority Group 6 (adults with specified underlying health conditions, and certain categories of unpaid carers). We expect to share more information about vaccination for people in this group soon
- Otherwise, please wait to be contacted, and thank you for your patience – and we have now received confirmation from Welsh Government that the target for inviting everyone in Priority Groups 5-9 for vaccination is 30 April.
- Second dose appointments begin this week for the people who received their first dose at the start of our programme from 8 December. This is because we need to deliver the second dose around 11 weeks after the first dose, in line with the approach agreed across the UK.
- Vaccinations are by appointment only, and please arrive as close to your appointment time as possible to help us give everyone the best possible experience at the vaccination centres.
- You will receive your invitation when you are due for your appointment, based on the priority order across the UK. In some circumstances, you may be invited from our reserve list to help us ensure no vaccine is wasted.
- Please don't contact your GP, pharmacy, health board, hospital or local authority about an appointment – until you receive your invitation.
- And it remains vital for everyone to continue to follow the guidance on Hands Face Space even if you have received the vaccine. Coronavirus is still circulating in Powys, and Wales is in lockdown and **alert level 4**. By following social distancing, maintaining hand hygiene, and wearing a face covering we can keep ourselves and each other safe.

Thank you for everything you are doing to Keep Powys Safe – and please do feel free to share this information in your organisations, networks and communities.

Carol Shillabeer, Chief Executive, Powys Teaching Health Board



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## Reminder to people in Priority Groups 1-4

Over 90% of people in Priority Groups 1 to 4 have already received their vaccination. Some have not yet received their vaccination for clinical or social reasons, whilst some people will decline the vaccine. But if you know someone who has not yet been invited then please let us know so that we can make sure they are invited.



We now have a Priority Access Form for anyone in Priority Groups 1 to 4 who has not yet received their invitation. This helps us to fast-track you to an appointment:

**People aged 80 and over** who are registered with a GP in Powys:

[Over 80 in Powys and not received an invitation to vaccination? - Powys Teaching Health Board \(nhs.wales\)](https://www.nhs.uk/healthboards/Powys-Teaching-Health-Board/)

**People aged 75-79** who are registered with a GP in Powys:

[Age 75 to 79 - Powys Teaching Health Board \(nhs.wales\)](https://www.nhs.uk/healthboards/Powys-Teaching-Health-Board/)

**People aged 70-74** who are registered with a GP in Powys:

[Age 70 to 74 - Powys Teaching Health Board \(nhs.wales\)](https://www.nhs.uk/healthboards/Powys-Teaching-Health-Board/)

**Adults who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable** and registered with a GP in Powys:

[Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Adults - Powys Teaching Health Board \(nhs.wales\)](https://www.nhs.uk/healthboards/Powys-Teaching-Health-Board/)

*Remember that this group includes individuals with specific conditions:*

- *solid organ transplant recipients*
- *people with specific cancers:*
  - *people with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy*
  - *people with lung cancer who are undergoing radical radiotherapy*
  - *people with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment*
  - *people having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer*
  - *people having other targeted cancer treatments that can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors*
  - *people who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs*
- *people with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)*
- *people with rare diseases that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as severe combined immunodeficiency (SCID), homozygous sickle cell disease)*
- *people on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection*

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- *problems with your spleen, for example splenectomy (having your spleen removed)*
- *adults with Down's syndrome*
- *adults on dialysis or with chronic kidney disease (stage 5)*

*Other adults with underlying health conditions are due to be invited in Priority Group 6, for which invitations will begin soon.*

**Frontline health and care workers** providing intimate care for people in Powys in the COVID-19 vaccination priority groups:

[Frontline Health and Care Workers - Powys Teaching Health Board \(nhs.wales\)](https://www.nhs.uk/healthcareworkers)

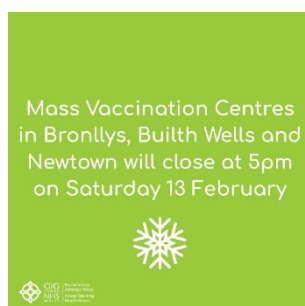
If you know people who live in Powys but are registered with a GP practice outside Powys, then they will be invited for vaccination through the programme in the neighbouring county:

[Are you registered with a GP outside Powys? - Powys Teaching Health Board \(nhs.wales\)](https://www.nhs.uk/are-you-registered-with-a-gp-outside-powys)

## More Snow hits the county

Our vaccination efforts didn't fully escape the effects of the snow last week, but once again we are grateful to the team for ensuring no vaccine was wasted.

On Saturday 13 February snow began to fall heavily in parts of the county. We made the decision early in the day that our Mass Vaccination Centres in Bronllys, Builth Wells and Newtown should close at 5pm.



This was the right decision, because with snow falling across the county we need to keep our staff and patients safe. Our teams set into action to invite everyone to come before 5pm, so that people could travel safely as snow and icy conditions were set to worsen into the evening.

Our booking team worked hard to contact everyone. Although unfortunately some people were not at home, or unfortunately the vaccination booking system does not have latest telephone contact details for every patient. Please do accept our sincere apologies if you were unable to attend earlier, or if we were unable to reach you, and contact our booking hub (details in your booking letter) to arrange a new appointment as soon as possible.

More information about the COVID-19 vaccination programme in Powys is available from our website at: [www.pthb.nhs.wales/covid-vaccine](https://www.pthb.nhs.wales/covid-vaccine)

Rest assured that no vaccine went to waste thanks to the efforts of our team of staff and volunteers, and the response from communities across Powys.

<https://pthb.nhs.wales/news/health-board-news/our-mass-vaccination-centres-are-closing-at-5pm-on-13-february-due-to-snow/>

## Accessible Resources from Public Health Wales

We want to ensure that no one is left behind in our vaccination programme. As part of this commitment, Public Health Wales has produced COVID-19 vaccination information in a range of formats to increase accessibility for people across Wales.



The latest resources include Easy Read leaflets, large print formats, and BSL videos. The library of resources continues to expand to help people find out more about COVID-19 vaccination, and to ensure informed consent.

Visit the Public Health Wales website for the latest library of accessible resources: <https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/immunisation-and-vaccines/covid-19-vaccination-information/accessible-information/>

## Update on our Reserve Lists

This week our Reserve List is open for people aged 65-69. We have already vaccinated around a third of people in this aged group, but it is one of the biggest priority groups so vaccinating everyone will take time.



More information about the COVID-19 vaccination programme in Powys is available from our website at: [www.pthb.nhs.wales/covid-vaccine](http://www.pthb.nhs.wales/covid-vaccine)

We expect everyone aged 65-69 and registered with a GP in Powys to receive an invitation letter by the end of February. But, in the meantime you can join our reserve list:

[Are you able to attend a Mass Vaccination Centre appointment at short notice? - Powys Teaching Health Board \(nhs.wales\)](#)

The reserve lists open every Friday morning at 9am, and if you meet the current eligibility criteria you can join the reserve list for appointments in the week ahead. Our reserve lists are subject to change on a day to day basis to help us meet demand, respond to changing vaccine supplies, help us to ensure that no vaccine doses are wasted, and to vaccinate as many people as possible as quickly as possible.

## Second Dose Appointments Under Way This Week

In line with UK-wide policy, second dose appointments for COVID-19 vaccination are taking place around 11 weeks after the first dose appointment. More information about the UK-wide policy is available from the Public Health Wales website:

[COVID-19 vaccination information - Public Health Wales \(nhs.wales\)](#).

The very first vaccinations in Powys took place in the week beginning 7 December 2020. The second dose appointments for these people will begin later this week.

If you have attended a mass vaccination centre in Bronllys, Builth Wells or Newtown for your first dose appointment then we will contact you nearer the time for your second dose appointment.

[Second Dose Appointments - Powys Teaching Health Board \(nhs.wales\)](#)

## Update on vaccine supplies

Here in Powys and across Wales we remain firmly on schedule to achieve our goal of offering vaccination to everyone in Priority Groups 1 to 9 by the spring. This means that vaccination will have been offered to:

- Everyone aged 50 and over
- Everyone aged 16 and over with the underlying health conditions identified in the latest guidance

And by the spring, we expect to have clearer guidance about plans across the UK for vaccinating the rest of the population.

Recent weeks have seen the fastest period of progress due to strong supplies of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine. The UK ordered 40 million doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine. This means that we are now reaching the halfway point, and the remaining supplies of Pfizer/BioNTech must be retained for second dose appointments which begin this week.

More information about the COVID-19 vaccination programme in Powys is available from our website at: [www.pthb.nhs.wales/covid-vaccine](http://www.pthb.nhs.wales/covid-vaccine)



It is vital that we have guaranteed stocks of Pfizer/BioNTech to deliver second doses. This is because current guidance is clear that people should be offered their second dose appointment with the same type of vaccine as their first dose (there are a small number of clinical exceptions).

This means that the only vaccine currently available for use in the UK is AstraZeneca (whilst the Moderna vaccine has been approved for use in the UK, the first supplies are expected this spring). The AstraZeneca vaccine is not yet available in such large quantities.

So, after the record number of first dose vaccinations in the last fortnight, we have all been planning for a period when second doses start and when the number of new first dose appointments will reduce.

This is very much expected based on UK supplies, and is part of our plan for achieving the goal of offering vaccination to everyone in Priority Groups 1-9 by the spring.

## Rising COVID-19 cases in Powys

The number of positive cases of COVID-19 has been rising sharply in Powys in the last week. This has occurred at a time when cases have been falling elsewhere in Wales, ranking Powys as the third highest rate of positive cases of COVID-19 in Wales, and the highest percentage of tests returning a positive result.



This rise in cases has also coincided with the sombre news that over 200 people from Powys have now died following a positive test for coronavirus.

Stuart Bourne, Director of Public Health in Powys explains: "The recent rise in the rate of cases is partly due to outbreaks of COVID-19 in specific settings across the county. Workplaces provide an opportunity for infection to spread, especially in

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settings where people work closely, where there is a high throughput of staff and where the environment may allow the virus to persist.

“It is vital that all employees in workplaces follow guidance around hand hygiene, social distancing and use of personal protective equipment (PPE) both in and out of the workplace to prevent outbreaks occurring. In particular, car sharing and congregating at breaks or at the start and end of shifts should not take place. If at all possible, people should be working from home.

“There is evidence that a new, more infectious strain of COVID-19 is circulating in Powys. The ‘Kent’ variant is now commonly being isolated in the test results of Powys residents. This is concerning because it is more easily spread and it is more likely that exposure to the virus will lead to infection.

“This is why it remains vital that we all continue to follow the advice to stay at home, follow social distancing rules and wear face coverings in indoor public places. Vaccination does offer the hope of a brighter future, but for now it is crucial that we continue to do all we can to protect ourselves and others from COVID-19. Remember - Hands, Face, Space.”

Please remember, all of Wales is in lockdown (alert level 4) where people must follow national guidelines and:

- stay at home
- meet only the people you live with
- work from home if you can
- wear a face covering where required
- wash your hands regularly
- stay 2 metres from anyone you do not live with

Everyone should follow this guidance whether or not they have received COVID-19 vaccination. More information about what we will all need to do at Alert Level 4 is available from the Welsh Government Website at [www.gov.wales/coronavirus](http://www.gov.wales/coronavirus)

For more information about COVID-19 testing in Powys, visit the health board’s website at [www.pthb.nhs.wales/coronavirus/coronavirus-testing](http://www.pthb.nhs.wales/coronavirus/coronavirus-testing)

## **In case you missed our last edition**

Previous editions of our newsletter are available [from our website](#). Last week’s edition included:

- Welcome from Carol Shillabeer
- Vaccination Heroes: Facilities Teams
- Sharing Your Feedback
- Call to people in Priority Groups 1-4
- Update on Reserve Lists
- Update on Second Dose Appointments
- Watch Again - our Online Q&A with Carol Shillabeer is available to watch online
- Useful Links

More information about the COVID-19 vaccination programme in Powys is available from our website at: [www.pthb.nhs.wales/covid-vaccine](http://www.pthb.nhs.wales/covid-vaccine)

## Further Information about COVID-19 vaccination:

More information about our COVID-19 vaccination programme here in Powys is available from the Powys Teaching Health Board website:

- [www.pthb.nhs.wales/covid-vaccine/](http://www.pthb.nhs.wales/covid-vaccine/)

More information about the national COVID-19 vaccination programme in Wales is available from the Public Health Wales website:

- [Iechyd Cyhoeddus Cymru](#) (CY) and [Public Health Wales](#) (EN)

The latest information about the number of COVID-19 vaccination doses delivered in Wales is available from the Public Health Wales dashboard – please remember that PTHB has the smallest population of all health boards, and is around a third of the size of the next smallest health boards (Cwm Taf Morgannwg, Hywel Dda):

- [Public Health Wales dashboard](#)

More information about the Welsh Government's strategy for COVID-19 vaccination:

- [Llywodraeth Cymru](#) (CY) and [Welsh Government](#) (EN)

You will receive an invitation when you are due for your vaccination. You don't need to apply for an appointment – please don't contact your GP, pharmacy, health board, hospital or local authority about an appointment until you are contacted.



You can follow Powys Teaching Health Board on Facebook, and @PTHBhealth and @BIAPiechyd on Twitter for the latest social media updates from the health board.



More information about the COVID-19 vaccination programme in Powys is available from our website at: [www.pthb.nhs.wales/covid-vaccine](http://www.pthb.nhs.wales/covid-vaccine)