

Gwybodaeth Brechyln COVID-19 Ym Mhowys

Information about COVID-19 Vaccination in Powys

Update for Stakeholders, 8 January 2021

Dear Colleagues

With COVID-19 vaccination being such an important issue for all of us I wanted to provide you with a brief update on our progress here in Powys and the next steps, and to share an invitation to an online Q&A on Tuesday 12 January (more details below).

Please do accept my apologies that this briefing is in the English language only at this stage. The fast pace of change on COVID-19 vaccination means that I did not want to delay sending this update to you, and further bilingual information is attached.

Here in Powys we are making very good progress in delivering COVID-19 vaccination, but I recognise that there is still a long way to go.

So far, over 5000 people have been vaccinated through the Powys vaccination programme. Nearly 3000 invitations have already been sent to people aged 80 and over in the county, inviting them to book an appointment at our mass vaccination centres in Newtown, Builth Wells and Bronllys. This represents around a third of our 80+ residents, and everyone aged 80 and over will receive their invitation during January.



Members of our Pharmacy Team in Newtown

Alongside this, great progress has been made on vaccination for residents of care homes for older adults. At the time of writing, nearly half of our care home residents have received their first dose vaccination. Nearly all will have received this by the end of next week.

Our mass vaccination centres are set to be joined this month by GP practice-led vaccination clinics across the county. The first of these opens next week in Presteigne, with clinics set to follow across Powys. This will increase access and availability for people for residents.

Vaccination is by appointment only, and we are following the guidance on priorities set by the UK's independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). This means that vaccination is currently under way for the JCVI's top priority groups:

- Care home residents
- People aged 80 and over
- Health and care workers – to help protect the vulnerable people in their care, who are most at risk of catching coronavirus and developing serious illnesses

Following this, vaccination will begin for people in the next priority groups.

If someone is in a priority group, they will receive an invitation when they are due for their vaccination. They don't need to apply for an appointment – please don't contact your GP, pharmacy, health board, hospital or local authority about an appointment.



Support from PAVO volunteers in Bronllys

The next priority group is people 75 years of age and older, followed by each of these groups in turn:

- People 70 years of age and older, and people who are clinically extremely 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
- People 65 years of age and older
- People aged 16 to 64 with underlying health conditions, which puts them at higher risk of serious disease and mortality
- People 60 years of age and older
- People 55 years of age and older
- People 50 years of age and older

As mentioned, these priorities have been set nationally by the JCVI. Together these groups represent around 99% of preventable deaths from COVID-19.

Soon we will be able to confirm the timetable for invitations to the next priority groups. But this week our focus has understandably been our invitations to the most vulnerable people – the over 80s and care home residents – and putting in place our plan for ramping up our capacity even further in the coming weeks.

Following this first phase of the UK-wide COVID-19 vaccination programme, further recommendations are awaited from the JCVI. The advice from the JCVI is that the focus for the second phase should be on preventing further hospital admissions and vaccinating those people who are at increased risk first.



Thelma Davey receives her first dose vaccination in Ystradgynlais

It is very clear that the arrival of the COVID-19 vaccines is a source of hope. We all begin to look forward to a return to normal life in time.

But the vaccination programme will take time, and we are very grateful for your support and patience.

On this note I know that our over 80s have faced some challenges in contacting our booking teams. Please do bear with us, and improvements to our booking and appointment systems are being made every day.

The key messages for everyone are:

- Everyone in Powys aged 80 and over is being invited for vaccination in January.
- Vaccination of care home residents is also well under way.
- Following this, invitations will be sent to people in the next priority groups.
- Please wait to be contacted, and thank you for your patience.
- You will receive your invitation when you are due for your appointment, based on the priority order across the UK).
- Please don't contact your GP, pharmacy, health board, hospital or local authority about an appointment.
- Good progress is being made in Powys – we currently have the highest levels of vaccination per head in Wales – and we will all see the vaccination programme continue to expand during January and beyond.

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.

By taking these important steps for ourselves, and for those around us, we can all play our part to Keep Powys Safe.

Alongside this, you must self-isolate if you or anyone in your household has symptoms These are: high temperature; a new continuous cough; a loss of or change to your sense of smell or taste.

If you have symptoms then get a test. Local testing units are available across the county. Home testing kits are available if you cannot travel.

You can book a test online at www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test.

You can book a test by telephone by calling 119 between the hours of 7am and 11pm. Calls are free. If you have hearing or speech difficulties call 18001 119.

If you do test positive then please help our local contact tracing team to stop coronavirus in its tracks. Our local Powys contact tracing team is here to protect your health and the health of others, and is part of our Test Trace Protect partnership between Powys Teaching Health Board and Powys County Council.

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

Thank you for everything you are doing to Keep Powys Safe, and I look forward to the opportunity to answer your questions at our online event on Tuesday (more details are below). Please do feel free to share this information in your organisations, networks and communities.

Carol Shillabeer
Chief Executive, Powys Teaching Health Board

COVID-19 Vaccination Online Q&A Event with Carol Shillabeer

Tuesday 12 January 2021, 5.30pm-6.30pm

[Join online via this link](#)

You are invited to an online event with Carol Shillabeer from 5.30pm to 6.30pm on Tuesday 12 January 2021. This will provide an opportunity to update you on the COVID-19 vaccination programme in Powys.

How do I join?

You can join the session from most web browsers by clicking on [this link](#).

When do I join?

You are welcome to join just before 5.30pm by clicking on the link above. The meeting will start shortly after 5.30pm to allow people time to join.

How do I participate?

This event will be provided through Microsoft Teams Live Event. It includes a Q&A function which allows you to ask questions. We regret that we may not have time to answer all the questions raised, but hope that the briefing will provide an opportunity to cover the main themes.

I cannot attend – will I still be able to watch?

If you cannot attend on the day, you can watch the event at any time using the web link.

I am having trouble joining

The briefing will be recorded so that it is available for people who have trouble joining, or who are not available to join us at 1pm.

More information about being an attendee of a Microsoft Teams Live Event is available from the [Microsoft website](#)

Care Home Vaccination begins in Powys

Crosfield House in mid-Powys saw the first care home residents in the county receive their COVID vaccine on Wednesday 6 January



The 48 people at the care home in Rhayader were vaccinated using the Oxford-AstroZeneca vaccine which became available for use this week.

This marks the beginning of a process to vaccinate all care home residents in Powys by 16 January.

The son of an 86-year-old care home resident has spoken of his massive relief after his mum was among the first in Wales to be given the to protect her against the deadly Coronavirus.

Mary Willis, 86, who celebrated her birthday on Tuesday, was one of those to receive the vaccine and her son said: "My mum went into Crosfield after a fall and the care home have been brilliant.

"She's almost back to her old self and we're just so relieved she's been vaccinated.

"It will be nice to plan ahead for the future and the vaccine is key to that – it gives us all something to look forward to."

The vaccine was administered by a team of six nurses from Powys Teaching Health Board, and the Manager of Crosfield House, Wayne Rees, said:

"Powys Teaching Health Board and the local authority have been great during the pandemic and our staff were all vaccinated in early December.

"These last 12 months have been very challenging. It's taught me a lot and it's taught the staff a lot and I really can't praise them highly enough. They've all really pulled together."

More information is available from our website: <https://pthb.nhs.wales/news/health-board-news/care-home-vaccinations-begin-in-powys/>

Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 vaccination in Powys

What should I do about COVID-19 vaccination?

Please wait to be contacted to be invited for your vaccination. Vaccination is available by appointment only.

Invitation letters are currently being issued based on the national priority list, beginning with invitations to people aged 80 and over.

Patients will be invited based on where you are registered with a GP. Frontline health and care workers will be invited via your employer based on where you work.

About a third of letters to people aged 80 and over in Powys have been sent already (around 3000 people), and everyone aged 80 and over (around 10,000 people) should receive their invitation during January.

Please don't contact your GP, pharmacy, health board, hospital or local authority about an appointment.

Is COVID-19 vaccination taking place in Powys?

Yes. COVID-19 vaccination is currently taking place for the first national priority groups:

- residents of care homes for older adults
- frontline health and care workers
- people aged 80 and over

Vaccination is currently taking place in three appointment-only vaccination centres in Newtown and Bronllys (currently open) and Builth Wells (opening w/b 11 January) as well as in care homes and hospital wards.

Vaccination is also due to begin in primary care clinics across the county, and in other domiciliary settings, later this month.

Over 5000 people have already received their first dose vaccination through the Powys vaccination programme. Weekly updates on vaccination figures are published by [Public Health Wales](#).

Who are the priority groups for COVID-19 vaccination?

Delivery of the vaccination programme in Powys is following guidance from Welsh Government and from the Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation:

- [Advice on national priority groups from the Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation \(last updated 30 December 2020\)](#)
- [Advice on the time period between the first and second dose from Public Health Wales and the Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation \(last updated 4 January 2021\)](#)

This means that our current priority groups are:

- residents of care homes for older adults
- frontline health and care workers
- people aged 80 and over

Once vaccination of people in these three groups is completed, invitations will be sent to people in the next priority groups. The next priority groups identified by the Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation are currently:

- people 75 years of age and over
- people 70 years of age and over and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals ("shielding")
- people 65 years of age and over
- all individuals aged 16 years to 64 years with underlying health conditions* which put them at higher risk of serious disease and mortality
- people 60 years of age and over
- people 55 years of age and over
- people 50 years of age and over

It is estimated that taken together, these groups represent around 99% of preventable mortality from COVID-19. The Committee will also be considering the priorities for the next phase of vaccination once these priority groups have been offered vaccination.

You will be invited based on where you are registered with a GP. For example, Powys residents who are registered with a GP in England will be invited via the vaccination programme in England. The main exception is frontline health and care workers who will be invited via their employer based on where they work.

Please accept our apologies that we are not yet in a position to confirm the timetable for invitations to the next priority groups. We will confirm this as soon as possible.

*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

How are people aged 80 and over being contacted for COVID-19 vaccination?

You will receive an invitation letter when the vaccination programme reaches your priority group. Please don't contact your GP, pharmacy, health board, hospital or local authority about an appointment.

Invitation letters are currently being sent to people aged 80 and over during January 2021. With nearly 10,000 people aged 80 and over in Powys it will take some time to arrange all COVID-19 vaccination appointments. This means that invitation letters are being sent in batches throughout January.

You may hear of friends or neighbours who receive their invitation letter before you, but please be assured that your invitation is coming. We need to issue invitations in batches so that all vaccination appointments can be offered in a way that keeps you safe and keeps our staff safe. Thank you for your patience until your invitation letter arrives.

Please accept our apologies that our phone lines have been very busy due to high demand for COVID-19 vaccination. Thank you for your patience and please do keep trying. We are also working hard to expanding our booking and appointment service to make it easier for you to contact us.

When the vaccination programme for people aged 80 & over is completed, invitation letters will next be sent to people aged 75 and over. Invitations will then be sent to the next priority group, and so on. Please accept our apologies that we are not yet in a position to confirm the timetable for the invitation letters to the next priority groups.

When will people aged 75 and over be contacted for COVID-19 vaccination?

When the vaccination programme for people aged 80 & over is completed, invitation letters will next be sent to people aged 75 and over.

Invitations will then be sent to the next priority group, and so on.

As more information becomes available to us about vaccine delivery and supplies, we will be able to provide more details of the timetable for inviting other priority groups.

You will receive an invitation letter when the vaccination programme reaches your priority group. Please don't contact your GP, pharmacy, health board, hospital or local authority about an appointment.

Further Information about COVID-19 vaccination:

More information about our COVID-19 vaccination programme here in Powys is also available from the Powys Teaching Health Board website at www.pthb.nhs.wales/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccination/

More information about the national COVID-19 vaccination programme in Wales is available from the Public Health Wales website at: www.phw.nhs.wales/covid-19-vaccination

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.