# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **COVID-19 spring booster vaccine to be offered to those considered to benefit the most from vaccination** |
| **DATE**  | **07 February 2024** |
| **BY** | **Eluned Morgan MS, Minister for Health and Social Services** |

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), as part of its latest review of the COVID-19 vaccination programme, has today published a statement recommending a spring booster for those citizens it considers would benefit most from being vaccinated.

The primary aim of the COVID-19 vaccination programme continues to be the prevention of severe disease (hospitalisation and mortality) arising from COVID-19. The Committee has recommended, as a precautionary strategy, a booster dose in the spring for:

* **adults aged 75 years and over;**
* **residents in a care home for older adults, and**
* **individuals aged 6 months and over who are immunosuppressed (as defined in table 3 or 4 in the** [**Green Book**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-the-green-book-chapter-14a)**).**

In making this recommendation, the JCVI has considered available data from the UK and internationally, which continues to suggest older people are at the highest risk of experiencing severe disease if infected by COVID-19. The Committee has also stated that the spring dose should be offered around 6 months after the last vaccine dose, although operational flexibility around the timing is allowed. The latest COVID-19 XBB-variant vaccines, which most closely match currently circulating variants, are considered preferable for use in the campaign. These are the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna mRNA XBB.1.5 vaccines.

I have accepted this advice and health boards have been asked to plan their spring booster programmes on this basis. The details of the programme will be set out imminently in a Welsh Health Circular issued by the Chief Medical Officer.

As ever, I am extremely grateful to the NHS and everyone involved in the vaccination programme for their continued hard work to help keep the most vulnerable in our communities safe and protected.