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University Health Board

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COVID-19 vaccine programme update Wednesday 15 December 2021

Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) is updating residents as to how we will meet the ambitious aim of offering all eligible adults a booster appointment by 31 December 2021, following the recent announcement by the First Minister.

Key to the success of offering booster vaccination to all eligible adults by the end of the year, is people accepting their vaccine when offered and doing everything they can to attend as scheduled, whether offered in a Mass Vaccination Centre (MVC), a GP surgery, or possibly a local community pharmacy in the near future.

To accelerate the programme, drop-ins will also be offered as an option for some people. These will be phased according to prioritisation in some MVCs at allocated times and subject to capacity, with scheduled appointments taking priority (more detailed below).

Please adhere to the set opening times for drop-in vaccines or you will be turned away and will disrupt scheduled appointments.

Those eligible to drop-in from Wednesday 15 December are everyone who had their second or third primary dose 13 or more weeks ago and aged 50 and over, or aged 16 and over and works in a care home or frontline health or social care; is an unpaid carer; is considered at risk of COVID-19 infection (JCVI priority groups 4 and 6); or lives with someone who is immunosuppressed.

Chief Executive, Steve Moore, said: "I am incredibly proud of all our vaccination staff, both those the public meet at the centres and everyone behind the scenes, who have worked tirelessly after a year of vaccinating seven days a week.

"I'd like to acknowledge the support offered from primary care, volunteers, partners and staff and volunteers whom assist the programme and have responded to our call for assistance.

"I also thank the public for stepping forward to accept vaccination and for those of you who have been so patient and thankful. The next few weeks will be incredibly challenging for all involved and I'm asking our communities to please be kind to our staff and follow our advice on what to do.

"Please share this information with friends and family, especially those without regular internet or newspaper access. Now is the time for us to work together to ensure as many of our population receive the vaccine they are eligible for as quickly as possible. Thank you, and please get your booster, or your first or second doses if you need them, as soon as possible. Diolch yn fawr."

The health board's focus has been ensuring people continue to be given an appointment in priority order based on age and vulnerability. We will do this in the following ways:

Selected GP practices and community pharmacies

We are working with GP practices, to bring on board any that are able to deliver more booster vaccines locally. This has to be carefully balanced against the practice's ability to maintain the delivery of core services.

We also have a number of community pharmacies who have committed to participating in the programme and they will locally publicise the times of their clinics for booster delivery.

Please do not call your GP surgery or community pharmacy to ask about the COVID-19 vaccine. If your GP practice is participating in the booster programme they will contact you directly and offer you an appointment, please accept it if they do.

Additional support for housebound and care home residents

Housebound patients will be supported by local GP practices, where their staffing allows, whilst in other areas our community vaccination team will arrange to visit and offer vaccination. If you have already contacted the health board with your details you do not need to contact us again as we are working through the lists with our GP teams.

Care homes are being contacted urgently to ensure all residents are offered a booster and will be supported by GP practices and our community vaccination team. If the care home has already contacted us with these details they do not need to contact us again as we are working through these lists with our GP teams.

Increasing scheduled appointments

Scheduled appointments will continue to be issued at an increased pace. This may be by letter and/or a text message. We aim to contact everyone eligible for a booster with an appointment by Friday 31 December. Due to the current time of year and challenges with appointments reaching people, we are offering drop-ins phased by age prioritisation.

We understand people have had difficulty in contacting us by phone or email to cancel or rearrange their appointment. In response, the health board has increased the number of call and email handlers. We will continue to support people to attend for a vaccination at a time and day which suits them but in order to ensure we are reaching everyone with their offer by the 31st December, re-arranged appointments will be made into the first few weeks of January.

We ask people to do everything possible to attend the appointment they are given, this will help the programme greatly, but we hope this extra resource will help should you need it.

Drop-in clinics

If you have been given a scheduled appointment, please keep it.

To ensure we can extend the offer of an invite out at pace and that no one is left behind, booster drop-in clinics are reinstated at six of our mass vaccination centres, strictly for the following groups (*see bottom of update for participating MVCs and opening times):

- Everyone aged 50 and over who received their second or third dose at least 13 weeks ago
- Anyone aged 16 and over who received their second or third dose at least 13 weeks ago who either a) works in a care home b) is a frontline health or social care worker c) is an unpaid carer d) lives with someone who is immunosuppressed or e) is considered at risk of COVID-19 infection (priority groups 4 and 6)

The groups eligible to drop-in for boosters will be expanded as soon as possible, please look out for announcements on the Hywel Dda UHB website, social media accounts or in local media. Your understanding is appreciated as we try to ensure our older and clinically vulnerable population are prioritised initially.

First doses will be available at all mass vaccination centres except Cwm Cou for drop-ins for:

- anyone aged 12 and over (over 16s only at drive-through at the Showground).

Second doses will be available at all mass vaccination centres except Cwm Cou for drop-ins for:

- Anyone aged 16 and over if it has been at least 8 weeks since their first dose.
- Those aged 12 to 15 are asked to wait for an appointment or drop-in if it has been more than 12 weeks since the first dose was received (over 16s only at drive-through at the Showground).

People who choose to drop-in are advised that booked appointments will be given priority and they should be prepared to potentially experience long waits, possibly outdoors, or be turned away if there are health and safety concerns at the centre. Verbal abuse or aggression towards any centre staff or volunteers will not be tolerated.

Those with booked appointments are asked to arrive no more than 10 minutes before their appointment time and make themselves known on arrival to a volunteer or member of staff.

Please do not attend if you are feeling unwell or if you have had a COVID-19 positive test in the last 28 days. Under 18s are currently advised to wait 12 weeks from a COVID-19 positive test before having any COVID-19 dose.

Drop-in opening times for all first and second doses, and those in priority groups 1 to 9 for boosters

Most participating mass vaccination centres will make every effort to accommodate eligible drop-ins between 11am and 8pm. Tenby MVC will accept drop-ins between 10am and 6pm on the set days it is open. Drop-ins at the drive-through showground will be between 11am and 7pm. Please note Cwm Cou MVC, is doing scheduled appointments only due to social distancing and traffic management safety issues. Please do not arrive early for drop-in sessions.

The MVCs open seven days a week for drop-ins for eligible groups are:

- Aberystwyth - Thomas Parry Library, Llanbadarn Campus, Aberystwyth University, SY23 3AS (closed 24, 25, 26 December and 1 January. Open until 4pm on Monday 27 December)
- Carmarthen (walk-in) - Y Gamfa Wen, University of Wales Trinity Saint David, SA31 3EP (closed 24, 25, 26 December, closing 31 December at 2.30pm and closed 1 January)
- Carmarthen (drive through – over 16s only) - United Counties Showground, SA33 5DR (closed 24, 25, 26, 27, 31 December and 1 January)
- Haverfordwest - Pembrokeshire Archives, Prendergast, SA61 2PE (closed 24, 25, 26 December and 1 January. Closes 2.30pm on 27, 30 and 31 December)
- Llanelli - Unit 2a, Dafen Industrial Estate, Heol Cropin, SA14 8QW (closes at 5pm on 18 December and at 4.30pm on Monday 27 and Thursday 30 December. Closed 24, 25, 26 and 31 December and 1 January)

Tenby MVC (Tenby Leisure Centre, Marsh Road, SA70 8EJ) will be open for drop-ins between 10am and 6pm on the following days in December:

- Friday 17 to Sunday 19 December; Tuesday 21 to Thursday 23 December; and on Tuesday 28 to Thursday 30 December.

- Closed on the weekends of 24 to 26 December and 31 December to 2 January.

Cwm Cou MVC (Ysgol Trewen, Cwm-Cou, SA38 9PE) is offering scheduled appointments only, due to social distancing and traffic management safety issues.

Please visit <https://hduhb.nhs.wales/covid19-vaccination> to keep up-to-date with this ambitious acceleration of the COVID-19 booster campaign in Hywel Dda.

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