



Weekly Covid Vaccine Newsletter from Swansea Bay University Health Board

Date: January 26th, 2021

Edition number: 3

Introduction:

Welcome to the latest edition of our weekly newsletter, which brings you up to date with where we are with the roll out of the Covid vaccines across Swansea and Neath Port Talbot.

Following feedback from readers this newsletter will now be an email rather than a Word document as some of you found the document took a long time to download, will contain just one image (the header above) and no coloured text or boxes for accessibility reasons and will contain less jargon.

So, let's get started.

Swansea Bay Covid-19 vaccination programme: timeline and explainer

The Swansea Bay Covid-19 vaccination programme is now well underway, with the latest number of vaccinations delivered standing at:

Running total: 37, 236

Vaccinations recorded yesterday: 2,953

(Please note this data was correct as of 7pm 25/01/21.)

Our target is to vaccinate all frontline health and social care staff, care home residents and staff, those aged 70+, and people who are **categorised as extremely** clinically vulnerable (shielders) by mid-February. These will be the first doses of the two-dose course of vaccination.

These vulnerable groups of people total around 88,000 in Swansea and Neath Port Talbot. So the good news is we're now over a third of the way there.

And with bigger supplies of vaccines now arriving, we're picking up the pace.

Here's a quick timeline of what's happened so far:

- **7th December:** Frontline health and social care staff vaccinations start with the first batches of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine. This is at our main hospitals and the Bay Field Hospital Mass Vaccination Centre or MVC.

- **5th January:** The easier-to-manage Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine arrives and Primary Care Clusters (groups of GP surgeries working together) start vaccinating in care homes
- **9th January:** GPs begin vaccinating over-80s in the community
- **11th January and 21st January:** Our other two Mass Vaccination Centres (MVCs) at Margam Orangery and Canolfan Gorseinon Centre open
- **20th January:** Vaccinations of people aged in their 70s (starting at age 79 and working down) at our three MVCs begin
- **Next:** Clinically very vulnerable people will begin to get their first doses shortly, with the vast majority of the doses delivered in the community

To get through the 88,000 vaccinations as quickly as possible, we are running multiple vaccination streams within the overall programme.

We are sharing out the work, using all our local NHS resources. The health board is working in close partnership with GPs. (Later on, other primary care providers like pharmacists are likely to get involved.)

However GPs don't have the resources to vaccinate all 88,000 people, and the mass vaccination centres run by the health board are not suitable for everyone, particularly the most vulnerable, who may often be better off having their doses in their local surgery or during a home visit.

So GPs have been given the responsibility of vaccinating in care homes, and patients on their lists who are aged 80 and over. They will also be responsible for vaccinating most of the clinically very vulnerable individuals. (Where GPs have indicated, in a small number of cases, that they cannot do this work, alternative arrangements are being put in place).

The health board, using our MVCs and hospitals, is vaccinating the other groups of people – frontline staff and younger individuals.

Waiting for a single group like the over-80s or frontline staff, to be finished first before moving on to the next priority group, would mean some of our vaccination resources standing by unused. We must get vaccines into arms, which is why we're twin-tracking programmes.

But it is inevitable that working this way will throw up some anomalies, like couples who are aged 80 and 79 getting their vaccinations in different places. Or some people in their 70s having their first dose before someone in their 90s.

We realise this is not as patient-centred as we would like, but working this way is the fastest way of delivering all 88,000 vaccinations at speed, so we would ask people to bear with us. GPs are working through their lists and inviting people over the age of 80 for vaccinations as quickly as they can. Now they have more generous supplies of the Oxford vaccines arriving, they are able to offer many more appointments. We estimate that GPs have already completed around half of those aged over 80's including the majority of care home residents.

Be assured that no slot meant for someone over the age of 80 is being given to someone in their 70s. The vaccinations are just running alongside each other in different places.

There is also a much higher proportion of people aged 70+ than 80+ in Swansea and Neath Port Talbot. So even though we are vaccinating both groups together, the over-80s programme is likely to be completed very soon.

Just a bit more background about the two vaccines being used. The Pfizer vaccine is challenging to handle. It must be stored at -70C, it comes in packs of 975 doses which cannot easily be split, and it

doesn't travel well. This vaccine is only practical for use at big sessions in hospitals or mass vaccination centres, as all 975 doses must be delivered over a 4 day period or unused ones thrown away. So therefore they aren't suitable for taking into care homes, or smaller GP clinics.

The Oxford vaccines, however, are logistically much easier to manage and more suitable to use in smaller community settings. Early on, supplies of the Oxford vaccines were less than expected, but these are now picking up, which is why GPs are now able to increase the numbers of people they can vaccinate.

Together, the three mass vaccination centres and our GPs are working as fast as they can to vaccinate these priority groups by mid-February.

After that, we'll be moving on to the next phases, and we will keep you updated with more details when we have them:

* By spring - people with an underlying health condition. All 50-69 year olds.

* By autumn – remaining adults

We hope you find this timeline and background information useful, and that it answers some of the questions you may have.

What's happening next?

- This week our Mass Vaccination Centre at the Bay Field Hospital will open [on Sunday, January 31st](#). This marks a further increase in the availability of vaccines at the weekend. Next week, Margam will be operating [Monday to Saturday](#). We also hope to open Gorseinon for five days [from February 8th](#), but this will depend on us having enough vaccine.
- We have also listened to feedback about the difficulties for older people venturing out in winter, so we have brought forward our last appointment time for patients to [6.15pm](#) and instead are reserving end of day slots for health and social care staff.
- By the end of this week vaccinators will have visited all care homes in this health board area, except those where there has been a significant outbreak of Covid. They will be revisited once the outbreak is over.
- We are expecting a much larger delivery of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine to GPs next week, which will help them vaccinate more people in the priority groups being looked after by local surgeries: the over 80s and those with serious and life-threatening illnesses who have been shielding, the so called Clinically Extremely Vulnerable group.
- We are improving some aspects of the Bay Field Hospital following feedback from patients including better signage, improved lighting around the site and creating an indoor waiting area as well as ensuring that we have enough wheelchairs available.
- If you are a carer for someone, then providing that you are in receipt of attendance allowance, you are eligible for the vaccine.
- The names of people with mobility problems who have been unable to take up the offer of vaccination at an MVC will be passed on to GP surgeries who will arrange more convenient vaccination.

How can I help?

- To help our MVCs and GP surgeries keep queues to a minimum please arrive on the correct date for your vaccination and no more than 10 minutes before your appointment. Please wait in the car if you are asked as this will stop you having to brave the elements. Whilst our systems usually run to time, an expected event could mean a slight delay to your appointment.

- If you are given an appointment at an MVC, please bring a list of the medication/tablets you take all the time with you. If you're on anticoagulants (medicine that helps to prevent blood clots) bring your yellow book or last INR result.
- If you have previously had a severe allergic reaction (known as an anaphylactic reaction) to a drug or injection, please ring the number on your letter and advise the booking team. If you can't receive the Pfizer vaccine, we will make alternative arrangements for you to receive the Oxford vaccine. Please note that this doesn't mean that people can choose which vaccine to have, you should only contact us if you believe you have previously had a serious reaction.
- If you live with someone else in your household and you have received separate appointments on different days or at different times, please contact the booking centre. Whilst we can't guarantee that we will be able to adjust your appointment (because we are booking around two weeks in advance), if we can accommodate a request to be vaccinated together then we will try our best.
- Watch out! Heartless criminals are offering fake Covid vaccines in a bid to make money from the pandemic. They are sending out text messages, making phone calls, setting up fake websites, sending authentic looking emails and even knocking front doors. In all cases they are asking for money, bank and personal details in return for a vaccine. Remember the vaccine is FREE and the NHS will never ask for bank details, personal documents, PIN numbers or passwords. We will NEVER call at your house without letting you know we are coming first.

Thanks for reading.

That's all for this week. We'll catch up as usual [next Tuesday](#).