



## **Weekly Covid Vaccine Newsletter from Swansea Bay University Health Board**

Date: February 9th, 2021

Edition number: 5

### 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.

### Latest figures

Please note: Figures correct as of 10pm on Monday, February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021. These figures are for the Swansea Bay University Health Board area, not the whole of Wales.

Running total: **73,436**

Vaccinated by GP practices: **26,623**

### Latest news

**Countdown to first milestone and mop up.** We are just a few days away from the first milestone - [Sunday, February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021](#) – which was set out in the Welsh Government's Vaccination Strategy for Wales. The aim is to offer all those in the priority groups one to four, that is care home residents and staff, frontline health and social care workers, those aged 70 and over and shielding patients, also known as clinically extremely vulnerable, their first dose of the vaccine by this date.

Swansea Bay University Health Board is on course to hit this target.

However, if you are in this group and believe you have not heard from us or your GP surgery, please contact us in one of the following ways:

- If you are 80 or over or classed as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) contact your GP practice UNLESS you are a CEV patient of either the University or Dyfed Road practices, in which case you should have received a text message or phone call by now inviting you for vaccination at one of our Mass Vaccination Centres (MVC).
- If you are between 70 and 79 email [SBU.COVIDbookingteam@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:SBU.COVIDbookingteam@wales.nhs.uk)
- Frontline social care staff can email [westglamsocialcarevaccinations@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:westglamsocialcarevaccinations@swansea.gov.uk)
- Frontline health board staff should contact their line manager.

**What's happening next?** We are now beginning work towards the second milestone, which is to offer a first dose to all those aged 50 and over and those aged 16 to 64 with underlying health conditions by May. You may also hear this group referred to as JCVI priority groups five to nine. However, we are waiting for further information on the kind of conditions which will be included in this group, so we will update you as soon as this has been agreed. This means that over the next couple of weeks people aged 69 to 65 in Swansea and Neath Port Talbot will receive appointment letters for vaccination at the Mass Vaccination Centres (MVC) at either The Orangery, Margam Park, or Canolfan Gorseinon Centre. The MVC at the Bay Field Hospital will be starting second doses of the Pfizer vaccine so will not be administering first doses in the next week.

**Getting to our MVCs.** Working with our partners in the local councils for voluntary services and local authorities, we are now able to offer free transport to our Mass Vaccination Centres for those with mobility issues who have received appointment letters. (As always, only those who have received appointments should come to our centres.)

To arrange transport Swansea residents can contact: [07538 105244](tel:07538105244) or [amymeredithcovid@scvs.org.uk](mailto:amymeredithcovid@scvs.org.uk)

And Neath Port Talbot residents can contact: [07494 966448](tel:07494966448) or [covid19discharge@nptcvs.org.uk](mailto:covid19discharge@nptcvs.org.uk)

It is our intention to include this information in the appointment letters which go out to patients.

On arrival at the centres our military colleagues, who have been trained to assist wheelchair users, will be on hand to help.

There is also a free bus available from the Quadrant and we are working with the bus company to see if the drop off and pick up point can be closer to the entrance to the Mass Vaccination Centre.

**Fact checking media reports on the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine:** We know many of you have questions and concerns about the use of the Oxford vaccine following recent media reports, so we have addressed them in this Q and A.

**Q:** Why is the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine still being given to people aged over 65 in our area when some European countries are not recommending it for that age group and South Africa has halted its roll out?

**A:** The UK stands by its decision to recommend this effective vaccine for all age groups. This was also the recommendation of the European Medicines Agency.

Clinical trials proved that the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine produces an immune response, that is it encourages the body to make antibodies against Covid-19, in people aged 65 and over, and that it is safe in all age groups. Should the vaccinated person come into contact with the infection, these antibodies help fight it off.

This shows the vaccine is working as it should.

Some European countries focused on the fact that too few people over 65 in the trial contracted Covid-19 so the vaccine's exact effectiveness could not be measured.

They said it was this insufficient data which was behind their decision. The UK does not agree with that decision. A small study has suggested this vaccine offers minimal protection against mild disease from the South African variant.

However, this study is small and it is still early days in the roll out of the vaccination, so further research is needed.

The vaccine appears to be highly effective against the dominant strains currently circulating in Wales.

What we can say is that there is evidence that it does prevent severe illness and hospitalisations and that is an important level of protection.

Health Minister Vaughan Gething said yesterday, Monday February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021, that a booster vaccination may be needed in future, but that is not known yet.

The Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine is currently being used by our GP surgeries in people aged over 80 and in some who are over 65 and clinically extremely vulnerable.

To date, more than 70,000 people have received their first vaccine dose in Swansea and Neath Port Talbot and we want to keep up that momentum.

Please, if you are offered a vaccination, make every effort to attend your appointment.

**What if I have more questions about the vaccines?** Our colleagues in Public Health Wales have created an excellent resource online, which includes lots of frequently asked questions on safety, allergies, the vaccine and pregnancy, the vaccine and breastfeeding and even vaccine ingredients. [Go to the Public Health Wales website for the answers to frequently asked questions about the vaccines and vaccination programme.](#)

**Take part in our Covid-19 survey.** Our colleagues at Safer Swansea and Safer Neath Port Talbot are doing a wide-ranging survey to gather local views about how people feel about the Test, Trace, Protect (TTP) scheme and the COVID-19 vaccine. Your answers will help us respond to the issues raised. The survey is anonymous and it shouldn't take more than 5 minutes.

[Go to this page to take part in the Test, Trace, Protect and Covid-19 vaccine survey.](#)

**There's no substitute for keeping Wales safe.** Wales' next Six Nations match is [on Saturday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021](#), against Scotland. While it might be tempting to have friends around to watch the match, please remember that we are still at alert level four which means you must not visit, mix with or invite around anyone you don't live with or who aren't in your support bubble. Why not video call your friends instead and share in the highs and lows in a safe way?

**From Albanian to Zulu.** Following issues, the Welsh Government has updated its list of links to the latest guidance and services for Covid vaccination in Wales in multiple languages. It is a PDF document which has been attached to this email. We understand this format may not be accessible for some people, so we will be putting these links on our own website in an accessible format as soon as possible.

That's all for this week. Many thanks for reading.

We'll catch up again next week.