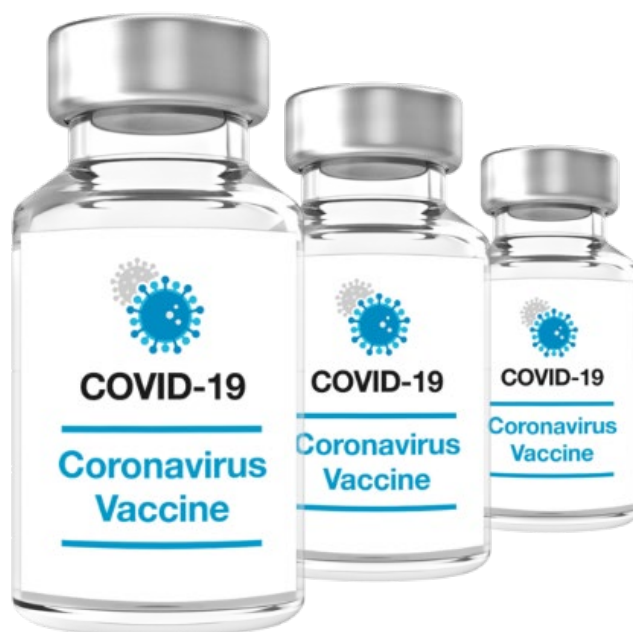




COVID-19 vaccine for people with a severe learning disability or severe mental illness

An easy read guide to help people understand if they should get a COVID-19 vaccine, in priority group 6



This document was written by **Welsh Government**. It is an easy read version of “**Covid-19 vaccinations for individuals with a learning disability or severe mental illness.**”

24 February 2021

How to use this document



This is an easy read version. The words and their meaning are easy to read and understand. But you may need support.



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. They have been explained in a box below the word.



If the hard word is used again, it is in **normal blue writing**. You can see what all the words in blue mean on **page 13**.



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Where this document says **we**, this means **Welsh Government**.



For more information go to the Welsh Government website, [by clicking here](#).

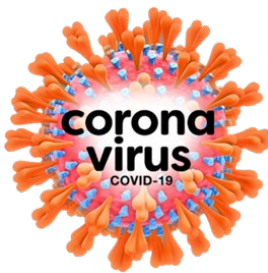


This document was made into easy read by **Easy Read Wales** using **Photosymbols**. To tell us what you think about this easy read document, [click here](#).

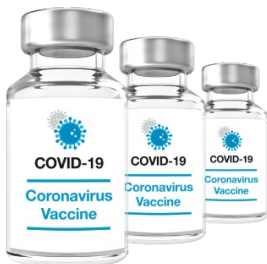
Introduction



This document is to help people understand how the **COVID-19 vaccine** will be given to people in Wales.



COVID-19 is an illness caused by a virus called Coronavirus. It is the reason we have had to stay home and wear masks.



The **COVID-19 vaccine** is a medicine that helps keep you safe from catching and spreading **COVID-19**.



This document will help explain when people with a **learning disability** or **severe mental illness** should get the **vaccine**.



Some people who have a **learning disability** are not able to communicate very well. And may not be able to live independently.

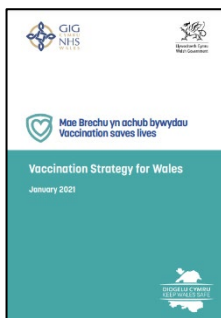
Someone with a **severe learning disability** may have a lot of problems with seeing, hearing, speaking and moving.



A **severe mental illness** includes things like:

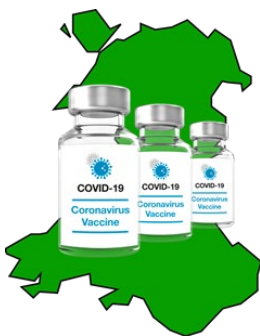
- schizophrenia
- bipolar disorder
- and other serious mental illnesses that stop people being able to take care of themselves.

Our plan for getting the COVID-19 Vaccine to everyone in Wales



In January 2021, we set out our plan for how we will give everyone in Wales the **COVID-19 vaccine**.

The **COVID-19 vaccine plan** says:



- **How** we will give out the **COVID-19 vaccine** as quickly and safely as possible.



- What groups of **people** should get the **vaccine** first.



The plan follows the advice from the **Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation** or **JCVI**.



The **JCVI** is a group of doctors and other experts. They give the government expert advice about **vaccines**. And how to protect people from infections and diseases.



England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are all following the advice from the **JCVI**.



The **JCVI** has written a list to say which groups of people should get the **vaccine** first. It is called the **priority list**.



There are 9 **priority groups** in the **priority list**. **Priority Group 1** were given the **vaccine** first. We will work through the groups until everyone has been offered the **vaccine**.

People have been sorted into priority groups based on:



- How likely they are to die if they get **COVID-19**.



- How likely they are to get very ill and need to go to hospital if they get **COVID-19**.



We hope this will help lower the number of people who get very ill and die from **COVID-19**.

People with a severe learning disability or severe mental illness



The JCVI has said people with a **severe learning disability** or **severe mental illness** should be in **priority group 6**.



It will be hard to find everyone who has a **severe learning disability** or **severe mental illness** using health records alone.



We do not want people to be missed out.



We are asking Health Boards and others to help us find everyone that should be in **priority group 6**.



We would rather include more people than we need to, than miss people out.

Health Boards can use what they know about the people in their area. And work with:

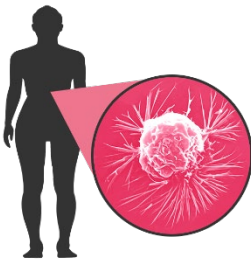
- GPs
- councils
- charity organisations
- community learning disability teams and mental health teams
- specialist services like substance misuse services
- families and carers



to make sure everyone who should be in **priority group 6** is offered the **vaccine** at the right time.



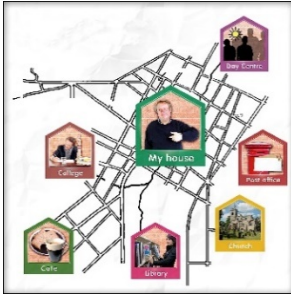
To help decide if someone should be in **priority group 6** because of a **learning disability** or **severe mental illness** these things should be looked at:



- What health conditions a person has.



- What their background is. Black and Asian people are more likely to get very ill if they get **COVID-19**.



- If they live in a poor area.



- What type of home they live in. For example, supported living.



- Whether they can follow the rules to keep safe - wearing a mask, washing hands often and staying away from people.



- How able they are to cope with medical treatment.



- If they are known to services. Like the community mental health team, or community learning disability team.

Supporting people to have the vaccine



To make sure lots of people get the **vaccine**, we need to make getting a **vaccine** as easy and comfortable as possible.



People will feel more comfortable and less stressed if they get their **vaccine** in a familiar place. Like their GP surgery.



Where possible **vaccines** should be given at GP surgeries.



Vaccines can be given in other places, like health care clinics, if this works better for people.



If a person with a **learning disability** or **severe mental illness** decides **not** to have the **COVID-19 vaccine**, we should do everything we can to check they have all the information they need to make that choice.



If a person is not able to make a decision for themselves, we must follow the law to make sure we do what is best for them.



We must make **reasonable adjustments** to support people to get their **vaccine**.



Reasonable adjustments are changes that places and services can make to make sure everyone is able to use them.

For example:



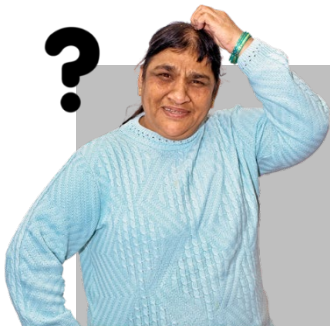
- We should make sure people get all the information they need in the way they need it.



- Support people to plan and prepare for the **vaccine**.



- Use things to help them relax. Like touch, music and soothing smells.



Don't worry if you are not sure whether you should be in priority group 6 or not.



You will be contacted and offered a **vaccine soon. But if you have any questions you can call the Wales Learning Disability Helpline on 0808 8000 300**

Hard words

COVID-19

COVID-19 is an illness caused by a virus called Coronavirus. It is the reason we have had to stay home and wear masks.

COVID-19 vaccine

The COVID-19 vaccine is a medicine that helps keep you safe from catching and spreading COVID-19. People who have a severe learning disability are not able to communicate very well. And are not able to live independently.

Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation or JCVI

The JCVI is a group of doctors and other experts. They give the government expert advice about vaccines. And how to protect people from infections and diseases.

Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments are changes that places and services can make to make sure everyone is able to use them.

Severe learning disability

Someone with a severe learning disability may have a lot of problems with seeing, hearing, speaking and moving.

Severe mental illness

A severe mental illness includes things like:

- schizophrenia
- bipolar disorder
- and other serious mental illnesses that stop people being able to take care of themselves.