



Changes to the routine childhood immunisation schedule and introduction of the measles, mumps, rubella and varicella (MMRV) vaccine in 2026

Toolkit for Healthcare Practitioners

This toolkit provides key information and resources to support the introduction of the MMRV vaccine and other changes to the routine childhood immunisation schedule in Wales from 2026.

Mae'r gwybodaeth hon ar gael yn Gymraeg. This information is available in Welsh.

The childhood immunisation schedule has changed in Wales in 2026.

These changes follow recommendations from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), the UK government's expert scientific advisory committee on vaccination and immunisation. The UK vaccination schedule is regularly reviewed and updated to keep people and communities protected. Changes may be needed as disease patterns change or as new vaccines become available.

What do I need to know?

It is important that you take time to understand the changes, share information with colleagues, and know where to find further resources. This is for both your own knowledge and to support your patients. This will help you deliver vaccinations confidently and respond to any questions.

What are the changes?

From 1 January 2026:

A new 18-month vaccination appointment is included in the childhood immunisation schedule.

- This appointment includes an additional, 4th dose of the 6-in-1 vaccine against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), polio, Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) and hepatitis B (DTaP/IPV/Hib/HepB).

Introduction of measles, mumps, rubella and varicella (chickenpox) vaccine - MMRV

- MMRV vaccine is introduced into the routine childhood immunisation schedule, replacing the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine.
- MMRV is offered at 12 and 18 months of age.
- There is no 'varicella-only' vaccine in the routine childhood immunisation schedule. MMR vaccine is still available for children aged 6 years and older and adults who have missed one or both doses of an MMR vaccine and are not eligible for the MMRV vaccine.

Varicella selective catch-up programme for those born on or after 01/01/2020 up to 31/08/22

- One dose of MMRV for children aged 3 years 4 months to under 6 years old who have **not had chickenpox** or **2 doses of varicella vaccination**.
- The programme will be delivered between 1 November 2026 and 31 March 2028 to help accelerate control and further reduce transmission in the population.
- There is no requirement for practices to check the history of chickenpox infection by undertaking serology testing for those who respond to the offer.

Please note that during the transition to the new schedule, children will receive different vaccines at different ages, depending on their date of birth. **For more information on vaccine eligibility, see 'Document and tools' below.**

For more information about the changes see [Changes to the childhood immunisation schedule - Information for health professionals](#).

Where can I find more information?

Visit and bookmark the following useful websites so you can refer to them quickly if needed:

Welsh Government policy:

- [Routine varicella \(chickenpox\) vaccination for young children from 1 January 2026 \(WHC/2025/046\) | GOV.WALES \(external site\)](#)
- [Changes to routine childhood and selective neonatal hepatitis B vaccinations \(WHC/2025/019\) \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES \(external site\)](#)



JCVI statements and meeting minutes:

- [JCVI statement on a childhood varicella \(chickenpox\) vaccination programme - GOV.UK \(external site\)](#)
- [Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation \(JCVI\) statement on changes to the childhood immunisation schedule - GOV.UK \(external site\)](#)
- [JCVI October 2023 meeting minutes \(external site\)](#)

Public Health Wales resources:

Public Health Wales have developed webpages and tools to support healthcare practitioners with the introduction of the MMRV vaccine and schedule changes.

Webpages:

For healthcare practitioners:

Visit the dedicated healthcare professional's webpage to read more about the changes, including frequently asked questions (FAQs):

- [Changes to the childhood immunisation schedule - Information for health professionals](#).

Information about the MMRV and MMR vaccines, including accompanying resources such as leaflets, posters and measles outbreak response resources, are available at:

- [MMRV and MMR vaccines – Information for health professionals - Public Health Wales](#)

Information about the additional 6-in-1 vaccine and implications for the selective hepatitis B programme can be found at:

- [Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis \(whooping cough\), polio, Haemophilus influenzae type b \(Hib\) and hepatitis B \(DTaP/IPV/Hib/HepB\)\(6-in-1\) - Information for health professionals - Public Health Wales](#)
- [Hepatitis B \(HepB\) - Information for health professionals - Public Health Wales](#)

Resources to support preschool vaccinations, including dedicated letters for managers and staff of preschool settings, and for parents of preschool children can be found at:

- [Vaccine resources for health and social care professionals - Public Health Wales](#) see 'Preschool vaccination programme'

Documents and tools:

- MMRV will be offered both routinely and as a selective single-dose catch-up for eligible individuals, as detailed in the 'Varicella selective catch-up programme' above. The [Public Health Wales MMRV eligibility tool](#) is available to guide you during the transition to the new schedule. **You can save this on your desktop and print it off.**
- View the updated [complete routine immunisation schedule for Wales](#) to see which vaccines children are due and when.

View and download the updated unscheduled form at [Vaccine resources for health and social care professionals - Public Health Wales](#) (see 'Child health system').

Check your knowledge: training and learning

Healthcare professional awareness raising sessions:

Learn about the introduction of the MMRV vaccine and other changes by accessing a range of dedicated awareness raising sessions. **The recordings and slides of all awareness raising sessions are available to view and download here** [Immunisation training resources and events - Public Health Wales](#)

Question and Answer Webinar:

- An in-depth webinar outlining changes to the routine childhood immunisation schedule, including introduction of MMRV and other changes in 2026.

Recorded slide sets:

- A series of recorded slide sets on varicella, measles and the introduction of the MMRV vaccine.

Immunisation training information for local providers:

- Training slide sets for health care professionals to assist with delivering the routine childhood schedule and changes to the schedule, including varicella vaccination MMRV (see 'Vaccine specific training slide sets'). These can support individual learning or use by health boards to implement training locally. Visit [Vaccine contacts - Public Health Wales](#) for contact details for your local team.

If you are a registrant new to immunising you will need to complete the Immunisation programme for new immunisers, available here [Immunisation eLearning - Public Health Wales](#) and the [competency assessment tool \(external site\)](#)

Resources from external agencies:

UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) resources:

- Read the relevant Green Book chapters [Immunisation against infectious disease \(external site\)](#)

Please consider Welsh Policy when referring to the resources below.

- The UKHSA [MMRV vaccination: information for healthcare professionals \(external site\)](#) provides detailed information on the MMRV vaccination programme and addresses common issues and questions, including guidance on children who are behind with their schedule and on outbreak response.
- Children with uncertain or incomplete immunisation status should be managed according to the updated [Vaccination of individuals with uncertain or incomplete immunisation - GOV.UK \(external site\)](#)
- The childhood immunisation eligibility calculator - [Health Publications \(external site\)](#) is available to help you understand and plan which vaccines are due and when.
- Additional guidance:
 - [Hexavalent combination vaccine: programme guidance - GOV.UK \(external guide\)](#)
 - [Childhood immunisation: quick guide for parents of premature babies - GOV.UK \(external site\)](#)
 - [A visual guide to vaccines - GOV.UK \(external site\)](#)

Legal framework:

- PGD templates: [Patient Group Directions \(PGD\) - Welsh Medicines Advice Service \(external site\)](#). Please note that these national PGD templates are not legal for use until adapted and authorised by the relevant Local Health Board.

Resources for the public:

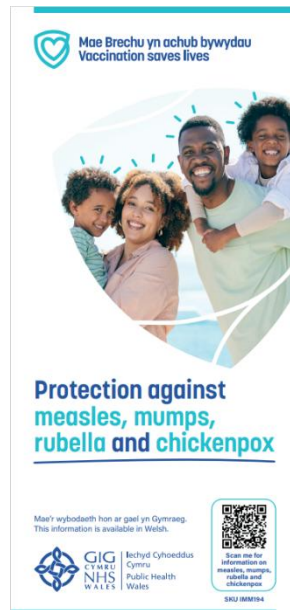
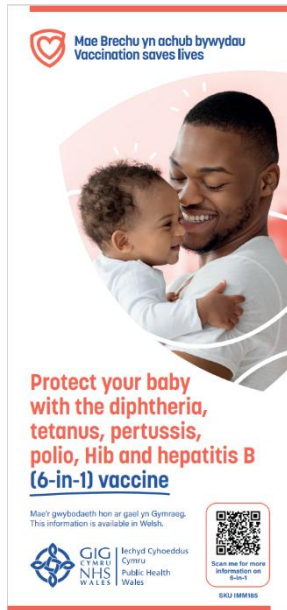
Sign-post parents and guardians to these webpages:

- [Changes to the routine childhood immunisation schedule - Public Health Wales](#)
- [MMRV and MMR - Public Health Wales](#)
- [Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis \(whooping cough\), polio, Haemophilus influenzae type b \(Hib\) and hepatitis B \(DTaP/IPV/Hib/HepB, or '6-in-1' vaccine\) - Public Health Wales](#)
- [Hepatitis B vaccine - Public Health Wales](#)

Here they can read about the changes and the different vaccines. They can also find out about eligibility and view a selection of frequently asked questions.

Order or download **free** resources:

Order **free** resources such as posters and patient information leaflets to support vaccination clinics and parents and guardians at: [Health Information Resources - Public Health Wales](#)



Sources of information on surveillance of vaccines and diseases:

- **Surveillance of childhood immunisation uptake data:** [COVER - National childhood immunisation uptake data - Public Health Wales](#) (Reports are published on a quarterly and annual basis).
- **Local Authority, GP and School Level Uptake Dashboards (Internal NHS staff only):** [Childhood Immunisation \(COVER\)](#)
- **Surveillance of Vaccines, Vaccine Preventable Diseases and Respiratory Infections:** [Surveillance of Vaccines, Vaccine Preventable Diseases and Respiratory Infections](#)

What else do I need to do?

Share learning with all those involved in the programme, including reception staff booking appointments. Consider using the 'immunisation training information for local providers' slide set to run a training and information session for colleagues.

Where else can I find support?

For vaccine queries, contact your local immunisation team in the first instance. Contacts in your health board can be found at: [Health Board vaccine team contacts](#)



To get in touch with the Vaccine Preventable Disease Programme team at Public Health Wales, email: phw.vaccines@wales.nhs.uk