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Vaughan Gething MS
Minister for Health and Social Services
Welsh Government
(Sent via email)

Saturday 9 January 2021

Dear Vaughan,

I write to you to raise a number of issues regarding the vaccination programme, although firstly I'd like to express my real hope that the rollout of the vaccine takes us into the final episode of this pandemic. However, the length of that final episode depends largely on the effectiveness of that programme. I will offer my support to all measures that increase its effectiveness and build faith in how the process is progressing.

There are real concerns about the vaccine deployment programme, not least regarding the pace, transparency and communications during these initial stages.

Perhaps understandably, there have been a number of concerns about the slow pace of roll out during the first month – the public are, after all, keen to receive the vaccine. Crucially we've already seen significant differences between health boards in terms of volume and pace, and I would like more information to help me understand these differences.

Specifically, I would like the Welsh public to have access to regular data on:

- How many vaccines have been made available for Wales out of the UK total;
- How many vaccines have been distributed to each health board;
- How many vaccines have been administered, and to which priority group in which local authority and health board areas.

And crucially we also need:

- Clear targets, including for each priority group, against which we can measure progress.

People simply want to know **when** they might expect the vaccine. Setting out the steps in your plan, and including a dashboard of information which answers the above questions will go far in helping to build public trust, as they will be able to track progress for themselves.

I also seek further clarity on the following matters:

- Prioritisation of health and care staff. Examples have been brought to my attention of staff who do not come into contact with patients receiving the vaccine ahead of covid ward nurses
- The operational capacity of the Welsh Immunisation System, specifically in its promise to “create appointments and automatically schedule second doses, send appointment letters and record vaccinations for every COVID-19 vaccine given” – could you confirm that it is currently able to perform all these tasks?

I have tried throughout this pandemic to signpost good practice from elsewhere that Wales may be able to learn from. Israel is currently leading the global race in vaccinating its population against the virus with 16% of its population vaccinated at the time of writing. So for example:

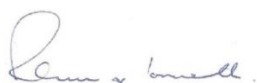
- Will Wales follow their model of operating vaccination centres 7 days a week?
- Their use of drive-through style vaccine centres helps speed up vaccine delivery. I understand a pilot is underway here but is widespread use of such centres a part of your planning?
- At the end of each day any remaining prepared vaccines are made available to anyone who turns up, not just those who meet the age or occupation criteria, so that prepared vaccines are not wasted. Could that be an option to further reduce waste?

I'd be grateful for your comments on how innovation will be encouraged in the vaccination programme.

We have a short period of weeks before the damage of strict conditions, in particular school closures, become even more significant. We also currently have a virus infecting more people every week than are receiving the vaccine. Expanding the pace and scale of vaccination is thus essential, as is restoring public confidence that governments have a plan for winning this battle against the virus.

I look forward to your urgent response.

Yours sincerely,



Rhun ap Iorwerth AS / MS
Deputy Leader, Plaid Cymru