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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Bae Abertawe  
Swansea Bay University  
Health Board

Cadeirydd/Chair: **Emma Woollett**  
Prif Weithredwr/Chief Executive: **Mark Hackett**

**gofalu am ein gilydd, cydweithio, gwella bob amser**  
**caring for each other, working together, always improving**

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg ac yn y Saesneg. We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Dyddiad/Date: 27<sup>th</sup> April 2021  
Ein Cyf / Our Ref: 21-C-040

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I refer to your Freedom of Information Act Request acknowledged by ourselves on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. Your request sought information relating to the COVID-19 vaccine and asthma.

**According to information publicly available online, people with asthma who require oral steroids or have previously been admitted to hospital are to be placed in group 6. Specifically: "Individuals with a severe lung condition, including those with asthma that requires continuous or repeated use of systemic steroids or with previous exacerbations requiring hospital admission".**

**It would appear that some GP practices are placing 'timeframes' on the hospital admissions, apparently in contravention of national guidelines. For example, people have been variously told that only hospital admissions in the last 1 to 5 years would qualify them for vaccination in group 6.**

**Please can you tell me if these are the exact guidelines being given to GP surgeries, specifically in the Swansea Bay University Health Board? If there are any guidelines that differ to these, please could you let me know what they are?**

**1. Are guidelines given to GPs exactly the same as made publicly available with regard to hospital admissions due to asthma?**

Group 6 is a very wide cohort and this has been defined nationally by the Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation and set out in guidance that as Health Boards we are obliged to follow.



Pencadlys BIP Bae Abertawe, Un Porthfa Talbot, Port Talbot, SA12 7BR / Swansea Bay UHB Headquarters, One Talbot Gateway, Port Talbot, SA12 7BR

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Swansea Bay University Health Board is the operational name of Swansea Bay University Local Health Board

At a UK level, there was an agreement on codes that would be used to identify patients in this group - around 18,000 codes in total and locally we have had no input into the codes, these codes are designed to identify people who are defined as 'at risk' of increased morbidity or mortality. Once the coding process identifies individual patients who fall in group 6, these individuals are identified electronically to GP practices and the Health Board.

**2. If not identical, what are the full guidelines being given to GPs regarding asthma patients with previous hospital admissions receiving the vaccine?**

Welsh Government confirmed that individuals with well controlled asthma have not been included in Priority Cohort 6 as the data are showing that they are at no greater risk of severe disease and complications than the general population and indicated that these individuals should be vaccinated in accordance with their age group. Eligible asthmatics defined as those who have had three prescriptions for oral corticosteroids in the last 24 months

**3. Do you know why some GP practices are saying asthma patients with previous exacerbations requiring hospital admission are only eligible for vaccination if those admissions were in the last few (variously 1-5) years?**

Whilst we would expect GP practices to follow guidance, the green book (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immunisation-against-infectious-disease-the-green-book#the-green-book>) also makes provision for individual clinical judgement to be applied.

**4. If no, can you confirm that GP practices refusing the vaccine to patients with previous exacerbations requiring hospital admission over 5 years ago are acting in contravention of public guidelines?**

Please see question 3.

I hope this information is helpful. If you require anything further please contact us at [FOIA.Requests@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:FOIA.Requests@wales.nhs.uk).

Under the terms of the Health Board's Freedom of Information policy, individuals seeking access to recorded information held by the Health Board are entitled to request internal review of the handling of their requests. If you would like to complain about the Health Board's handling of your request please contact me directly at the address below or register your complaint via [FOIA.Requests@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:FOIA.Requests@wales.nhs.uk).

If after Internal Review you remain dissatisfied you are also entitled to refer the matter to the information commissioner at the Information Commissioner's Office (Wales), 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Churchill House, Churchill Way, Cardiff, CF10 2HH. Telephone Number: 029 2067 8400.

Yours sincerely



Pam Wenger  
**Director of Corporate Governance**

