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Varicella (chickenpox) vaccination selective catch-up programme running November 2026 to March 2028

Visual aid and eligibility algorithm for
healthcare professionals



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Background

The NHS in Wales is offering a time-limited varicella (chickenpox) catch-up programme using the combined MMRV vaccine. This is to help protect eligible children against chickenpox infection.

Children **born between 1 January 2020 and 31 August 2022** are being offered **one dose of MMRV vaccine**. These children were too old to be offered the routine chickenpox vaccination when it was introduced into the Welsh childhood immunisation schedule earlier this year.

If these children have not had chickenpox infection or been vaccinated against chickenpox, they are at risk of getting the infection.

The MMRV selective catch-up programme is expected to accelerate control of chickenpox infection, reduce transmission, and provide protection for eligible children who remain susceptible to chickenpox.

This programme will run between **1 November 2026 and 31 March 2028**. Parents will need to be notified of eligibility by 31 March 2027.

The programme is based on Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) advice¹ and is outlined in the Welsh Health Circular².



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

Who should be offered the MMRV selective catch-up vaccine?

One dose of MMRV vaccine should be offered to children **born between 1 January 2020 and 31 August 2022** (those aged between 3 years 4 months to under 6 years on the 1 January 2026). Their eligibility is defined by their date of birth, not their age.

The vaccine should be offered to children who:

- have **no reported history of chickenpox infection** and/or
- have **not previously received two doses of varicella vaccine**.



GP surgeries do not need to check whether a child has had chickenpox or two doses of varicella vaccine before sending invitations. Eligibility can be confirmed if they respond to the offer. There is no requirement for GP surgeries to check the history of chickenpox infection by undertaking serology testing.

If there is uncertainty as to whether the child has had chickenpox infection before, parents can be advised that it is safe and better for their child to have the MMRV selective catch-up vaccine.

- The child should have had two previous MMR vaccinations. There **are no safety concerns** with having three MMR-containing vaccines.
- There **are no safety concerns** with giving the vaccine to a child who has already had chickenpox infection or previous varicella vaccination.

Which MMRV vaccines are used?

- ProQuad®
- Priorix Tetra®. Does not contain pork gelatine. Refer to **Vaccines and pork gelatine - Public Health Wales**

It is important to review the child's vaccination record and offer any outstanding vaccines.

Any missed vaccinations should be caught up using the UKHSA **Vaccination of individuals with uncertain or incomplete immunisation - GOV.UK** (external site)

Contacts

If you have any questions, please contact your health board

Vaccine contacts - Public Health Wales

or email phw.vaccines@wales.nhs.uk

Further information

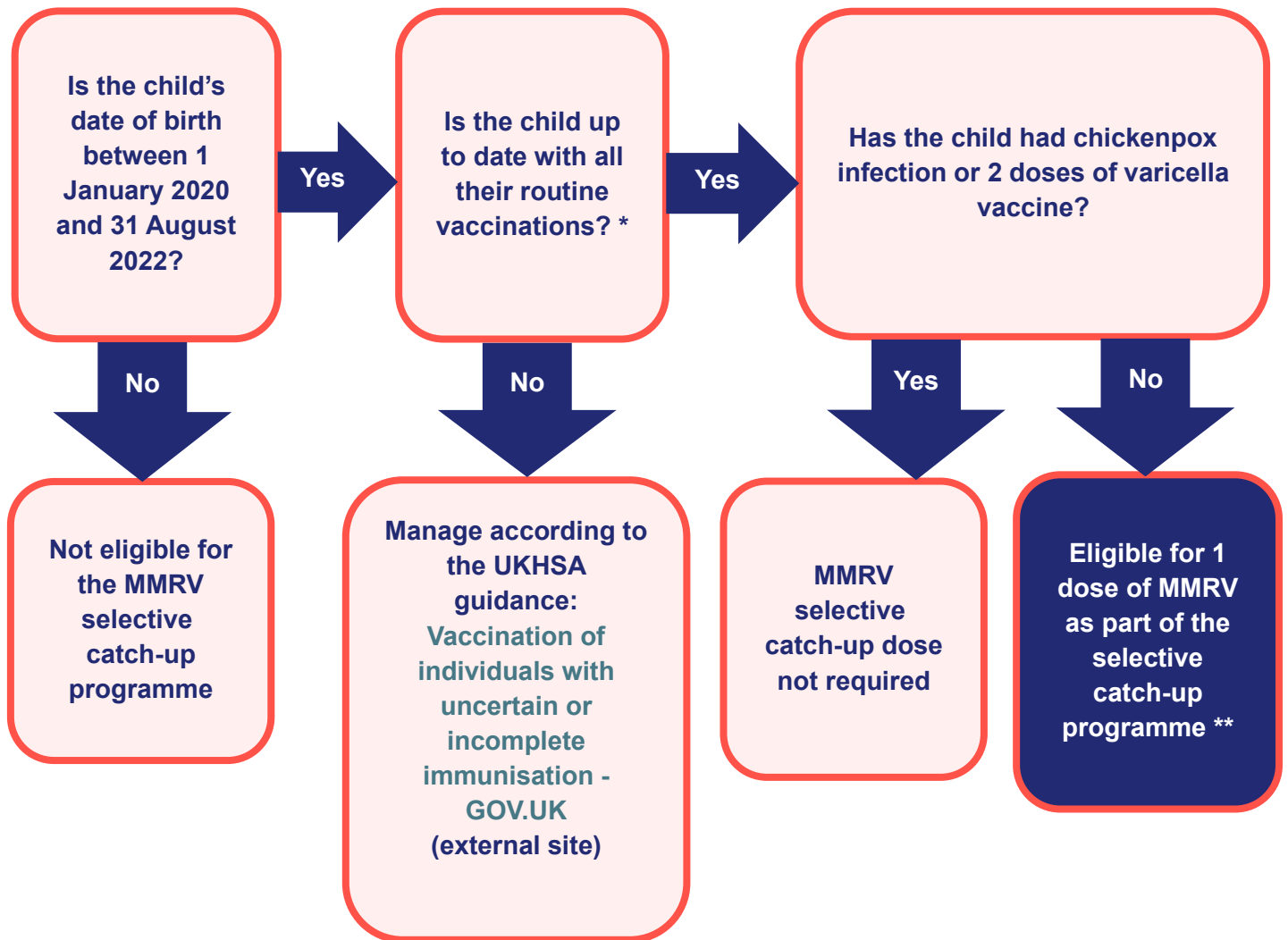
- Welsh Health Circular **Selective varicella (chickenpox) catch-up vaccination programme from 1 November 2026 (WHC/2026/032)** (external site)
- Public Health Wales (PHW) MMRV – information for healthcare professionals phw.nhs.wales/MMRV-MMR-professionals
- PHW MMRV – information for the public phw.nhs.wales/MMRV-MMR
- PHW Changes to the childhood immunisation schedule for healthcare professionals phw.nhs.wales/vaccines/ccs-information-for-health-professionals
- PHW Changes to the childhood immunisation schedule for the public phw.nhs.wales/vaccines/ccs-information-for-public
- PHW Routine immunisation schedules for Wales phw.nhs.wales/CompleteSchedule
- PHW **Immunisation training resources and events**
- PHW free resources to support vaccination phw.nhs.wales/health-information-resources
- **Varicella: the green book – GOV.UK** (external site)
- **Patient Group Directions (PGD) Welsh Medicines Advice Service** (external site)
- UKHSA **MMRV vaccination: information for healthcare professionals** (external site)
- **ProQuad® Summary of Product Characteristics (SmPC)** (external site)
- **Priorix Tetra® Summary of Product Characteristics (SmPC)** (external site)

References

1. JCVI statement on a childhood varicella (chickenpox) vaccination programme - GOV.UK (external site)
2. Routine varicella (chickenpox) vaccination for young children from 1 January 2026 (WHC/2025/046) [HTML] | GOV.WALES (external site)

Varicella (chickenpox) vaccination selective catch-up programme between 1 November 2026 and 31 March 2028

Eligibility algorithm



* For the routine schedules for Wales see: **Routine immunisation schedules for Wales - Public Health Wales**

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