

Provisional Vaccine Allocation Groups

From [Department of Health](#)

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The COVID-19 Vaccine Allocation Strategy sets out a provisional priority list of groups for vaccination once a safe and effective vaccine(s) has received authorisation from the European Medicines Agency (EMA).

The Strategy was developed by the National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) and Department of Health, endorsed by the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE), and approved by Government on 8 December 2020.

The Strategy is a further component to the State's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and will evolve and adapt with more detailed information on the vaccines and their effectiveness.

Your quick guide to the provisional vaccine allocation groups

This is the provisional order in which people in Ireland will be vaccinated against COVID-19.

- 1** People aged 65 years and older who are residents of long-term care facilities (likely to include all staff and residents on site)
- 2** Frontline healthcare workers
- 3** People aged 70 and older
- 4** Other healthcare workers not in direct patient contact
- 5** People aged 65-69
- 6** Key workers
- 7** People aged 18-64 with certain medical conditions
- 8** Residents of long-term care facilities aged 18-64
- 9** People aged 18-64 living or working in crowded settings
- 10** Key workers in essential jobs who cannot avoid a high risk of exposure
- 11** People working in education sector
- 12** People aged 55-64
- 13** Other workers in occupations important to the functioning of society

14 Other people aged 18-54

15 People aged under 18 and pregnant women

Provisional vaccine allocation groups

Adults aged ≥ 65 years who are residents of long-term care facilities

Consider offering vaccination to all residents and staff on site.

Rationale

At greatest risk of severe illness and death.

In Ireland, in the first wave of COVID-19, 56% of deaths occurred in this setting.

Ethical Principles

In line with the principle of minimising harm, vaccination of this group would protect those at greatest risk of a poor outcome from infection. It adheres to the principle of moral equality and the principle of fairness in recognising the disproportionate burden this group has carried.

Frontline healthcare workers (HCWs)* in direct patient contact roles or who risk exposure to bodily fluids or aerosols and those providing services essential to the vaccination programme

Rationale

At very high or high risk of exposure and/or transmission. In the first wave over 30% cases were in healthcare workers.

Ethical Principles

The principle of minimising harm is realised, as benefit will accrue to healthcare workers and the patients they care for, producing a multiplier effect. Society also has a reciprocity-based duty to protect those who bear additional risks to safeguard the welfare of others.

Aged 70 and older in the following order: 85 and older, 80-84, 75-79, 70-74

Rationale

At higher risk of hospitalisation and death.

Ethical Principles

The principle of minimising harm, moral equality and fairness are relevant as this group are at greater risk of carrying disproportionate burdens from the pandemic.

Other HCWs not in direct patient contact

Rationale

Provide essential health services, protect patients.

Ethical Principles

Maintenance of healthcare services, minimises harm by preventing injury, illness and death from causes other than COVID, and the principle of reciprocity is upheld.

Aged 65-69. Prioritise those with medical conditions* * which put them at high risk of severe disease

Rationale

At higher risk of hospitalisation and death.

Ethical Principles

By protecting those at greatest risk of poor outcomes from the disease the principle of minimising harm is upheld.

Key workers (to be further refined)

Rationale

Providing services essential to the vaccination programme

Ethical Principles

Upholds principle of minimising harm by protecting the continuing functioning of essential services. The principle of reciprocity is upheld.

Aged 18-64 years with medical conditions* * which put them at high risk of severe disease

Rationale

At higher risk of hospitalisation.

Ethical Principles

By protecting those at greatest risk of poor outcomes from the disease the principle of minimising harm is upheld.

Residents of long-term care facilities aged 18-64

Rationale

High risk of transmission.

Ethical Principles

The principles of moral equality and fairness are applicable, given the higher risk of exposure to infection and the potential vulnerability of some who may not be able to adequately protect their own interests.

Aged 18-64 years living working in crowded accommodation where self-isolation and social distancing is difficult to maintain

Rationale

Disadvantaged sociodemographic groups more likely to experience a higher burden of infection.

Ethical Principles

The principles of moral equality, minimising harm (especially in the context of multi-generational households) and fairness are relevant. Prioritising this group recognises that structural inequalities make some people more vulnerable than others to COVID-19

Key workers in essential jobs who cannot avoid a high risk of exposure to COVID-19. They include workers in the food supply system, public and commercial transport and other vital services

Rationale

High risk of exposure as unable to work without physical distancing.

Ethical Principles

The principle of minimising harm is upheld by reducing societal and economic disruption and the principle of reciprocity recognises the additional risk these groups bear in order to provide essential services.

Those who are essential to education and who face disease exposure, such as primary and second level school staff, special needs assistants, childcare workers, maintenance workers, school bus drivers

Rationale

To maintain the opening of full-time education of all children who have been disproportionately impacted from the pandemic.

Ethical Principles

Maintaining children's educational and social development and facilitating parents' employment adheres to the principle of minimising harm. The principle of reciprocity is also relevant given the potential additional risk being borne by such groups.

Aged 55-64 years

Rationale

Based on risk of hospitalisation.

Ethical Principles

The principles of moral equality, minimising harm and fairness apply.

Those in occupations important to the functioning of society, for example: third level institutions, entertainment and goods-producing industries who work in settings where protective measures can be followed without much difficulty

Rationale

Moderate risk of exposure.

Ethical Principles

The principle of minimising harm is upheld as protecting workers needed to maintain critical infrastructure and other important services will enable social and economic activity. The principle of fairness and moral equality also apply.

Aged 18-54 years who did not have access to the vaccine in prior phases

Rationale

If evidence demonstrates the vaccine(s) prevent transmission, those aged 18-34 should be prioritised due to their increased level of social contact and role in transmission.

Ethical Principles

The principle of minimising harm is relevant should it become clear that a vaccine can impact on transmission of the virus as this would indirectly protect the most vulnerable in society as well as restore social and economic activity.

Children, adolescents up to 18 years and pregnant women (to be refined)

Rationale

If evidence demonstrates safety and efficacy.

Ethical Principles

The principles of moral equality, minimising harm (if vaccines are shown to be safe and effective in these groups) and fairness.

*Includes health care workers who work in and out of all healthcare settings.

* *Chronic heart disease, including hypertension with cardiac involvement; chronic respiratory disease, including asthma requiring continuous or repeated use of systemic steroids or with previous exacerbations requiring hospital admission; Type 1 and 2 diabetes; chronic neurological disease; chronic kidney disease; body mass index >40; immunosuppression due to disease or treatment; chronic liver disease.