



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

High Level Task Force on COVID-19 Vaccination

16 August 2021 Meeting

Updates, decisions and actions from meeting

High Level Task Force on COVID-19 Vaccination

Monday 16 August 2021 14:00

1. Attendees

A. Members in attendance	B. Additional attendees in support
Prof Brian MacCraith, Task Force Chair	Kate Waterhouse, Task Force Secretariat
Karina Butler, Chair, NIAC	Sean Bresnan, National Director of Procurement, HSE
Dr Nuala O'Connor, ICGP	Gerry O'Brien, Health Protection Division, DOH
Paul Quinn, Government CPO and CEO, OGP	Roisin Collier, DOH
Paul Reid, Chief Executive Officer, HSE	Prof Martin Cormican, HSE
B. Additional attendees in support	Lyndsey Drea, Head of Comms, DOH
Minister Stephen Donnelly TD, Minister for Health	Eileen Hearne, Government Information Service
David Walsh, SRO WS4	Eugene Lennon, DETE
Dr John Cuddihy, SRO WS5	Damien McCallion, National Director, HSE
David Leach, SRO WS7	Deirdre McNamara, General Manager, Quality & Patient Safety, Acute Hospitals Division, HSE
Paul Flanagan, SRO WS3	Brian Murphy, Special Advisor
	Keiran Barbalich (PWC), Programme Office
	Michael Butler (PWC), Programme Office
	Yvonne Mowlds (PWC), Programme Office

Apologies: Liz Canavan, Chair, SOG on COVID-19; Dr Colm Henry, Chief Clinical Officer, HSE; Derek McCormack, Expert on Cold Chain Logistics; Dermot Mulligan, Assistant Secretary, Innovation and Investment Division, DETE; Dr Lorraine Nolan, Chief Executive, HPRA; Martin Shanahan, Chief Executive Officer, IDA; Derek Tierney, Programme Director; Dr Ronan Glynn, Deputy CMO, DOH; Dr Lucy Jessop, SRO WS2, Director, NIO; Fran Thompson, SRO WS6; Deirdre Watters, Head of Communications, DOH.

Updates, decisions and approvals by Task Force

At the meeting, the Task Force:

- Noted that vaccination of the final age cohort of the current programme has commenced; that the focus of the programme is on maximising uptake; that over 70% of the entire population has now received at least one dose with over 81% of adults fully vaccinated; and that new milestones have been reached with 2m vaccinations having been administered by GPs and 3m in VCs.
- Heard a communications update: a focus on those aged 12-15, with the objective of ensuring parents are well-informed about vaccines and the aim of achieving very high uptake among those with high-risk health conditions and those who live with a high-risk adult; also a focus on uptake among young adults, including shared content with 2,000 partners, and direct work with key partners (e.g. GAA), and through established youth communications group; strong reach continues across social media platforms and the @SciComm_Collective continues to generate content on vaccine myth busting and the Delta variant. News coverage last week included registration for those aged 12-15; pregnancy, fertility and the vaccine; walk-in clinics; and the booster programme. Research from multiple sources continues to show strong uptake attitudes, with recent HSE research showing increased satisfaction with and trust in the vaccination programme, and that 97% of those who have received a vaccine at a VC are satisfied with the experience.
- Heard a programme update: 6.37m vaccines have now been administered (ca. 89.7% of adults/70.6% of total population at least dose 1; ca. 81.3%/61.9% fully vaccinated); ca. 226K vaccines were administered last week; vaccination of those aged 12-15 commenced, with ca.94K registered by this morning; planning for the booster programme continues; a temporary IT outage at VCs on Friday 13 August did not create any delays and was quickly resolved. Plans for w/c 16 August including administration of ca.200K vaccines.
- Reviewed current topics:
 - Uptake enhancement, including flexible access measures and demographic profile of those yet to avail of their offer of vaccination;
 - International redistribution of vaccines not required for remainder of national programme – discussions on-going;
 - Completion of current programme – target of end-September;
- Considered a programme status report, noting that key issues/risks remain largely unchanged and that work remains ongoing across all workstreams, including WS2 (first additional Pfizer doses due to arrive this week); WS4 (vaccinations ongoing across cohorts, with 43 VCs open and two satellite VCs also in operation with another due to open in coming weeks); WS6 (significant work ongoing, including on planning for booster programme; Sprint 12_P has gone live); and WS7 (communication continuing to play a very significant role in the programme).
- Discussed Integrated Operational Planning, including:

- Vaccination of those aged 12-15, noting that 94K are now registered; ca.39K had been vaccinated by yesterday evening, with 34,500 of those in VCs; and 18K further appointments had been issued by this morning; feedback and lessons from the weekend were discussed.
- Increasing uptake: 91% of the population over 16 years of age has registered for/received a vaccine; analysis on uptake and hesitancy is ongoing, including work with the CSO; planning is ongoing for a broader range of walk-in options; and significant work is ongoing on increasing uptake in harder-to-reach groups.
- Discussed vaccine supply and forecast, noting that the EU has signed a contract with Novavax for the supply of 200m doses and that Ireland has opted into the APA; that the two expected large Pfizer deliveries are confirmed and that there is continuing uncertainty around Moderna deliveries.
- Noted under medium-term issues that NIAC considerations are ongoing in relation to the booster programme.
- Reviewed operational performance, including the scorecard (total available doses include over 260K doses of AZ and Janssen that will no longer be used in the programme); rolling 7-day cumulative total (down from peak); % of age groups vaccinated (extremely high uptake in older groups; almost 80% of those aged 18-29 have received at least one dose; ca. 70% of those aged 16-17 have registered; focus is now on vaccination of those aged 12-15 and on remaining hesitancy); cumulative uptake among adults across the EU/EEA (Ireland ranked 2nd after Malta); and a heat map of incidence rates (highest rates among those aged 13-34, with a slight increase in those over 65).
- Noted, in summary, successful commencement of vaccination for those aged 12-15; work on strategies to maximise uptake; and evidence that we are nearing completion of this phase of the programme.
- Heard from the Minister for Health, who noted the continued success of the vaccination programme, high uptake rates among younger people as well as the significant efforts that are ongoing to reach those who remain unvaccinated.
- Agreed that the next meeting will take place on Monday 23 August at 2pm.