



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

High Level Task Force on COVID-19 Vaccination

6 April 2021 Meeting

Updates, decisions and actions from meeting



High Level Task Force on COVID-19 Vaccination

Tuesday 6 April 2021 14:00

Updates, decisions and actions arising from meeting

1. Attendees

A. Members in attendance	B. Additional attendees in support
Prof Brian MacCraith, Task Force Chair	Kate Waterhouse, Task Force Secretariat
Prof Karina Butler, Chair, NIAC	Sean Bresnan, National Director of Procurement, HSE
Liz Canavan, Chair, SOG on COVID-19	Dr Ronan Glynn, Acting CMO, DOH
Fergal Goodman, Assistant Secretary, Health Protection Division, DOH	Gerry O'Brien, Director, Health Protection, DOH
Dr Colm Henry, Chief Clinical Officer, HSE	Deirdre Watters, Head of Communications, DOH
Rachel Kenna, Chief Nursing Officer, DOH	Paul Flanagan, SRO WS3
Barry Lowry, Chief Information Officer, OGCI	David Walsh, SRO WS4
Derek McCormack, Expert on Cold Chain Logistics	Dr John Cuddihy, SRO WS5
Dermot Mulligan, Assistant Secretary, Innovation and Investment Division, DETE	Fran Thompson, SRO WS6
Dr Nuala O'Connor, ICGP	David Leach, SRO WS7
Lorraine Nolan, Chief Executive, HPRA	Eileen Hearne, Government Information Service
Dalton Philips, Chief Executive Officer, DAA	Damien McCallion, National Director, HSE
Paul Quinn, Government CPO and CEO, OGP	Minister Stephen Donnelly, Minister for Health
Martin Shanahan, Chief Executive Officer, IDA	Keiran Barbalich (PWC), Programme Office
Derek Tierney, Programme Director	Michael McDaid (PWC), Programme Office
	Yvonne Mowlds (PWC), Programme Office

Apologies: Paul Reid, Chief Executive Officer, HSE; Dr Lorraine Doherty, Clinical Director Health Protection, HSE; Dr Lucy Jessop, SRO WS2, Director, NIO, HSE; Paul Flanagan, SRO WS3

2. Updates, decisions and approvals by Task Force

At the meeting, the Task Force:

- Noted that this week's context included the critical role of, and milestones achieved by the vaccination programme as set out by the Taoiseach last week; completion of the biggest week (w/e 4 April) and biggest day of the programme (Good Friday) to date; a cumulative 1.2 million doses distributed by the national cold-chain service with the programme on track to reach a milestone of 1 million doses administered this week; and the new 9-cohort Allocation Strategy announced by the Government.
- Reviewed open actions and near-term issues. Those now completed include a waste minimisation at point of use metric that has been built into the Operational Scorecard and the new Allocation Strategy, completing the action on policy/operational considerations and composition assessment of future cohorts and administering to cohorts in parallel. Progress continues on a workforce reporting dashboard; confirmation of cohort population sizes; the approach to vaccinating minority communities and vulnerable groups; and the role of pharmacists in the vaccination programme, with technology being put in place, request for expressions of interest issued, and a pilot planned for mid-end April with a view to onboarding pharmacists into the programme at a later stage.
- Heard a communications update: on the Public Information Campaign, the HSE radio campaign is moving to over-75s; HSE planning for next campaign is ongoing; 'We're on the Way' radio ad has ended; the campaign on changes to restrictions and vaccines ends on radio today and continues locally for the rest of the week; another overview campaign is planned; and high traffic continues to HSE and gov.ie sites. Upcoming events include tomorrow as 100th day of the Vaccination Programme, while news events focussed on the new Allocation Strategy and featured identification of cohort 4 and some good news on the vaccine 'bonus'. Research shows that numbers planning to get the vaccine remain high. The TF discussed the need for clear messaging on the programme (what's happening/planned) and the public portal, integration of vaccine and broader public health messaging, the need for clear data to feed into any updates on vaccine 'bonus', and communications after EMA messaging on AZ and clotting expected later this week. Minister Donnelly noted that a new Programme Communications head will be appointed shortly.
- Heard a programme update: as at 2 April, an estimated total of 923,667 doses had been administered, with 17.5% of the adult population having received at least one dose, and over 7% of the population having received 2 doses. Dose 1 for cohorts 1 and 2 has been substantially completed, over 50% of cohort 3 has received a first dose, administration to housebound patients is continuing, and although identification of people in cohort 4 remains challenging, progress is being made with 43,362 first doses administered. A total of 1.02 million doses have been distributed by the national cold-chain service and 1 million doses will have been administered by week end. An update to the population to be vaccinated was noted: based on CSO figures, 3.75million was the identifiable population over 18 years of age; those aged 16-18 (130,582) have now been added to that denominator to make a total of

3,778,094. Changes to the Allocation Strategy were reviewed, and it was agreed that updates to the PPR to reflect the new strategy would be shared with the team to give clarity on the new roadmap.

- Discussed current issues, including a media focus on the extent/composition of cohort 2; the new Vaccine Allocation Strategy (modelled and planning underway); communications to cohort 4 (information collated - shared with stakeholder network and on updated HSE website; ongoing engagement with advocacy groups); continued AZ restrictions in some countries (EMA safety committee meeting this week - announcement expected); and Pfizer supply acceleration (Ireland to get around 74K vaccines in Q2 instead of Q4 - schedule awaited).
- Discussed planned activity for w/c 5 April, including administration of 120-150K vaccines and continued planning for new cohorts through VCs; reviewed a programme status report, noting key risks, and heard an update on the workstreams: ongoing impact analysis of risks/issues arising; ongoing embedding of Programme Principles and methodology/toolkit across programme and work underway to agree integrated delivery plan/model for revised allocation strategy (WS1); ongoing engagement with manufacturers and good visibility on deliveries of Pfizer/Moderna, confirmation of weekly delivery schedule and more clarity on GP deliveries (WS2); confirmed acceleration of Pfizer doses (WS3); finalisation of public portal, pharma tool ready for testing, and ongoing work on vaccine certificates and data (WS6).
- Heard an update on integrated operational planning, including a summary timeline for cohorts 1-7 and an overview of planning for:
 - cohort 4: noting blended approach, complications in identifying cohort, and delays in take-up due to patients wishing to consult clinicians first;
 - cohorts 5 and 6: importance of public portal and scheduling - testing ongoing and HSE live surge capacity being readied for launch; comms being drafted;
 - cohort 7: large group, overlap with cohort 4, blended approach to vaccination;
 - hard-to-reach: 2000 identified in cohort 4 - to be vaccinated in April.Reviewed high-level risks and mitigation for cohorts 4-7, noting tight IT deadlines and the centrality of clear communication in moving to new cohorts. Discussed readiness of VCs, including capacity (agreed and in place for April and May; focus on maximising use of VCs, and ongoing monitoring and flexibility), geographical distribution of VCs, progress on national and local recruitment campaigns (837 vaccinators ready to start job; 216 started) and training (870 completed all). It was agreed that an overview of planning would be prepared within the next few weeks.
- Discussed vaccine supply and forecast, noting the final supply figure for Q1 of 1,187,100 doses, with over three times this expected in Q2 (3.9m), and looking ahead to the next 4 weeks with some uncertainty around AZ delivery schedules.
- Was invited to raise any other medium-term issues that should be considered for inclusion in this section.

- Heard an update on the operational performance scorecard, which the waste minimisation factor metric has now been built into; a review of the Cumulative Administration Efficiency for Q1 showed that this was consistently well above 90% and reached 98.2% for w/c 24 March.
- Noted, in summary, the new Allocation Strategy and planning and operationalisation implications, as well as ongoing preparations for a steep ramp-up, and recognition of the ongoing hard work and milestones achieved to date.
- Heard from Minister Donnelly, who noted the huge progress made to date and the key role that this would play in Ireland's exit from the pandemic
- Agreed that the next meeting of the HLTF will take place on 12 April at 2pm.

New actions agreed by Task Force – 6 April

#	Action	Owner
1	Overlay map of all vaccination sites to be prepared	David Walsh, Damien McCallion