



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

High Level Task Force on COVID-19 Vaccination

12 July 2021 Meeting

Updates, decisions and actions from meeting



High Level Task Force on COVID-19 Vaccination

Monday 12 July 2021 14:00

1. Attendees

A. Members in attendance	B. Additional attendees in support
Prof Brian MacCraith, Task Force Chair	Minister Stephen Donnelly, Minister for Health
Liz Canavan, Chair, SOG on COVID-19	Kate Waterhouse, Task Force Secretariat
Dr Colm Henry, Chief Clinical Officer, HSE	Sean Bresnan, National Director of Procurement, HSE
Barry Lowry, Chief Information Officer, OGCI	Dr Ronan Glynn, Deputy CMO, DOH
Derek McCormack, Expert on Cold Chain Logistics	Dr Lucy Jessop, SRO WS2, Director, NIO
Dermot Mulligan, Assistant Secretary, Innovation and Investment Division, DETE	Paul Flanagan, SRO WS3
Dr Lorraine Nolan, Chief Executive, HPRA	David Walsh, SRO WS4
Dr Nuala O'Connor, ICGP	Dr John Cuddihy, SRO WS5
Paul Quinn, Government CPO and CEO, OGP	David Leach, SRO WS7
Paul Reid, Chief Executive Officer, HSE	Eileen Hearne, Government Information Service
Derek Tierney, Programme Director	Michael Lohan, IDA
	Damien McCallion, National Director, HSE
	Deirdre McNamara, Acute Hospitals Division, HSE
	Deirdre Gillane, Chief of Staff
	Anna Conlon, Special Advisor
	Brian Murphy, Special Advisor
	Keiran Barbalich (PWC), Programme Office

Apologies: Prof Karina Butler, Chair, NIAC; Dalton Philips, Chief Executive Officer, DAA; Martin Shanahan, Chief Executive Officer, IDA; Gerry O'Brien, Health Protection Division, DOH.

Updates, decisions and approvals by Task Force

At the meeting, the Task Force:

- Noted another week of high administration levels for the programme, demand for Janssen from those aged 18-34 through pharmacies, and the pending rollout of the opt-in model.
- Discussed open actions, noting that the outstanding action on GP vaccine waste minimisation has been impacted by the cyber-attack, that the data to date indicates minimal waste, and that a more complete update will be provided in due course.
- Heard a communications update: public information campaigns are ongoing, including: #ForUsAll; vaccination of those aged 35-39 and those aged 18-34; a new campaign launching today on the digital COVID Cert; communications to target a range of nationalities, including across languages, are ongoing; vaccine messaging is ongoing across all social platforms; the SciCom collective is continuing to focus on vaccine myth-busting/hesitancy; and registration via HSE Live is reducing. News coverage last week included: registration for those aged 30-34; vaccination of 18-34s in pharmacies; AZ second doses; hospitality vaccination passes; and the digital COVID Cert. Research continues to show positive uptake trends, and issues identified through the monitoring of registration and uptake will inform communications.
- Heard a programme update: over 4.7m vaccines have been administered (ca. 71% of adults Dose 1; ca. 56% fully vaccinated); ca. 340K vaccines were administered last week, well above the target of 300K; integration of GP data is continuing following the cyber-attack; acceleration of AZ Dose 2 is nearing completion (82% complete by 11 July); administration of Janssen to 18-34s through pharmacies started on an opt-in basis - pharmacies have administered ca. 34.5K Janssen vaccines to date, including ca.11.5K to those over 50; mRNA registration portal opened for those aged 30-34. Plans for w/c 12 July include administration of over 300K vaccines across cohorts 5, 7, 9 and age cohort 18-34, with additional Pfizer clinics being scheduled to use VC stock; conclusion of AZ Dose 2; portal to open for those aged 18-34 to opt in to viral vector vaccination in VCs; and integration of PharmVax & COVAX to be completed.
- Updates on current issues:
 - Acceleration phase of vaccination programme, including AZ Dose 2, ongoing;
 - Potential procurement of surplus supplies from other EU Member States discussed at EU Steering Board – positive engagement and discussions ongoing;
 - Capacity of system to accommodate additional supplies – Programme Planning Roadmap (PPR) being used and work ongoing with HSE;
 - PRAC review of Pfizer/Moderna cases of myocarditis and pericarditis – completed last week and updates on warnings and side effects announced;
- Reviewed a programme status report, noting that work remains ongoing across all workstreams; under WS5, work is ongoing on increasing uptake even further; under WS6, the impact of the cyber-attack on resourcing is decreasing - renewed focus on enhancements, including Sprints 11 and 12, and significant work is ongoing on the

digital COVID Certificate, including by the HSE, DOH, OGCIO, NIO, DAA, DJ, DOT GIS and Revenue; this includes work on huge amounts of data and the transfer of records, preparation for dissemination of postal and e-mail certificates, and the setting-up of a dedicated call centre and other relevant support teams.

- Discussed Integrated Operational Planning, including:
 - Community Pharmacy update: big demand to date, with over 41K doses administered. Janssen being administered to the over-50s and on an opt-in basis to 18-34 year-olds; subset of pharmacies supporting GPs/VCs through administration of Pfizer. The impact on pharmacy data flow from the cyber-attack is near resolution.
 - VCs: 42 centres now in operation with some site moves completed/under consideration, and very high activity levels, with VCs prioritising administration of AZ second doses, reducing Pfizer intervals to four weeks, and offering as many other mRNA doses as possible;
 - Opt-in model: to begin at end this week with risks and mitigations identified;
 - No workforce issues were identified;
 - DNA analysis: figures remain steady at 6% for the period 7 June–4 July based on 1.1m appointments;
 - % age groups vaccinated uptake: work underway to derive further insights on uptake rates.
- Discussed vaccine supply and forecast, with Pfizer and Moderna schedules confirmed for next 4 weeks, and AZ and Janssen confirmed for July.
- Noted the main medium-term issues as being virus variants, NIAC considerations and the future vaccination policy, and heard an update on variants, which focussed on the Delta variant and included the recent ECDC threat assessment and WHO Press Statement, the 7-day incidence across some European countries, recent Public Health England briefing and data, and the UK SIREN study on health-care workers, as well as a review of the Lambda variant.
- Reviewed operational performance, including: the scorecard, noting that the time between registration and scheduling has improved; administrative efficiency, noting a slight drop in the last week related to the scaling-up of operations and vaccine retention practices in VCs – clinics are planned to administer these stocks; rolling 7-day cumulative total remains above 300K; an overview of incidence rates shows the continued impact of vaccinations, as well as an increase in the national 14-day and 5-day averages, with ca. 43% of cases in the last 14 days in those aged 19-35.
- Noted, in summary, the rollout of the “acceleration phase” (in response to Delta variant) of the vaccination programme, the update on variants of concern, and supply updates and implications for the programme currently and in the weeks and months ahead.
- Agreed that the next meeting of the HLTF will take place on Monday 19 July.