



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

High Level Task Force on COVID-19 Vaccination

3 August 2021 Meeting

Updates, decisions and actions from meeting

High Level Task Force on COVID-19 Vaccination

Tuesday 3 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
Liz Canavan, Chair, SOG on COVID-19	Dr Ronan Glynn, Deputy CMO, DOH
Dr Colm Henry, Chief Clinical Officer, HSE	Gerry O'Brien, Health Protection Division, DOH
Rachel Kenna, Chief Nursing Officer, DOH	Roisin Collier, DOH
Barry Lowry, Chief Information Officer, OGCI	Lyndsey Drea, Head of Comms, DOH
Derek McCormack, Expert on Cold Chain Logistics	Eugene Lennon, DETE
Dr Lorraine Nolan, Chief Executive, HPRA	Damien McCallion, National Director, HSE
Dr Nuala O'Connor, ICGP	Eamonn Fahey, Special Advisor
Derek Tierney, Programme Director	Brian Murphy, Special Advisor
B. Additional attendees in support	Keiran Barbalich (PWC), Programme Office
Dr Lucy Jessop, SRO WS2, Director, NIO	Yvonne Mowlds (PWC), Programme Office
David Walsh, SRO WS4	Fiona Smith (PWC), Programme Office
Dr John Cuddihy, SRO WS5	
David Leach, SRO WS7	

Apologies: Dalton Philips, Chief Executive Officer, DAA; Paul Reid, Chief Executive Officer, HSE; Martin Shanahan, Chief Executive Officer, IDA; Paul Quinn, Government CPO and CEO, OGP; Sean Bresnan, National Director of Procurement, HSE; Deirdre Watters, Head of Communications, DOH; Anna Conlon, Special Advisor;

Updates, decisions and approvals by Task Force

At the meeting, the Task Force:

- Noted that 6m vaccinations will have been administered by this coming weekend, and the significant milestone of 3m vaccinations administered in VCs was reached today, with GPs expected to exceed 2m vaccinations administered shortly and 75% of the adult population expected to be fully vaccinated by end of this week. Also noted the success of the weekend's walk-in vaccination clinics.
- Heard a communications update: public information campaigns are ongoing, including #ForUsAll and #WeCanDoThis; over 75% of those aged 18-29 have registered or been vaccinated, many via walk-in clinics; information is updated online on an ongoing basis; and communications are being prepared in respect of vaccination for those aged 12-15 and will be available online prior to portal opening. Research continues to show extremely positive vaccination attitudes, reflected in uptake rates, and increasing positive attitudes among younger groups; initial data also shows that 63% of parents will definitely or maybe have their child vaccinated.
- Heard a programme update: 5.9m vaccines have now been administered (ca. 87.1% of adults dose 1; ca. 73.5% fully vaccinated); ca. 282K vaccines were administered last week; portal for those aged 16-17 opened with high registration (ca. 60%); ca.30K vaccinations were administered at walk-in clinics last weekend, with significant numbers of under-20s attending; and planning, including on consent, public communications and ICT, is ongoing with respect to vaccination of those aged 12-15, expected to commence in the next two weeks. Plans for w/c 2 August including administration of 200-250K vaccines.
- Reviewed current issues:
 - Flexible access to vaccination – lessons learned from walk-in clinics being considered in the context of future options;
 - Potential procurement of surplus supplies from EU Member States directly/through EU Steering Board – agreement signed to purchase 700K Pfizer doses from Romania, likely to be received by end August; Ireland has advised the EU that it wishes to suspend future AZ deliveries;
 - HPSC/HSE Comms analysis of population uptake – significant increase in uptake, particularly among younger people (biggest increase among those aged 30-39, including due to walk-in clinics: 80% now at least one dose); work ongoing on increasing uptake in younger and socially vulnerable cohorts;
 - Booster programme - implications for workforce and existing channels, including VC infrastructure, under consideration by HSE.
- Considered a programme status report, noting the move to a demand-led programme with a focus on increasing uptake, and that work remains ongoing across all workstreams, including WS2 (6.2m vaccines delivered to date); WS3 (agreement to purchase additional 700K Pfizer doses); WS4 (vaccination progressing across cohorts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9 and socially vulnerable groups); and WS6 (Sprint 12_C Hotfix live since 27 July; focus now on changes to support vaccination of those aged 12-15).

- Discussed Integrated Operational Planning, including:
 - Recent NIAC recommendations on mRNA vaccines for those aged 12-15, noting key dependencies (consent, public information campaign and IT changes), and on boosters, noting provisional identification of priority groups;
 - Rollout of vaccinations to 12-15 year olds (ca. 279K), noting that: the primary model will be VCs with involvement of GPs and pharmacies, the portal is expected to open by end of next week, and the focus is on maximum vaccination in advance of schools reopening;
 - An overview of Janssen/AZ opt-in model, which has involved administration of 147k Janssen doses by pharmacies since early July (70% to 18-29yos), noting the wind-down of this option as pharmacies transition to Pfizer only, and that the VC AZ opt-in option has now ceased due to sufficient mRNA in VCs;
 - An overview of walk-in vaccination clinics, attended by >30K people with broad engagement across all age groups, particularly younger age groups (ca.65% under 20; ca. 20% aged 20-29; ca. 7% over 40); and
 - DNA analysis for 19-25 July (8.9%).
- Discussed vaccine supply and forecast, noting good visibility on mRNA supplies for the next four weeks; suspension of AZ supplies; and delayed Janssen delivery
- Noted under medium-term issues that NIAC considerations on vaccinations for those aged 12-15 have concluded, and ongoing considerations include heterologous use of vaccines and boosters. It was noted that consideration of future vaccination policy is ongoing and will inform the scope and timing of a booster programme.
- Reviewed operational performance, including the scorecard (HPRA's ninth safety update published); all-vaccine administration efficiency (96.6% from 21-28 July; measurement will become less relevant as programme becomes demand led); rolling 7-day cumulative total (peak on 5 July; weekly totals are now falling as expected); % of age groups vaccinated (extremely high uptake overall; at least partial/full vaccination for 99/97% of the over-70s, 96/94% of 60-69s, 94/92% of 50-59s and 88/83% of 40-49s); age cohort progress (77% of those aged 18-29 registered, including nearly 60% of those aged 16-17); cumulative uptake among adults across the EU/EEA (Ireland ranked 3rd overall - one of three EU countries with full vaccination figures over 70%); and a heat map of incidence rates (substantial disease activity; unvaccinated the most vulnerable).
- Noted, in summary, the ongoing operationalisation of NIAC guidance on vaccination of those aged 12-15; the end of 'opt-in' AZ/Janssen clinics; the success of walk-in clinics and consideration of lessons learned for future; and the transition to a booster programme, including timing, complexities and workforce/infrastructure.
- Noted that confirmation of meeting on Monday 9 August will be circulated as soon as possible.