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## High Level Task Force on COVID-19 Vaccination. 23 August 2021 Meeting. Updates, decisions and actions from meeting

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Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

# High Level Task Force on COVID-19 Vaccination

## 23 August 2021 Meeting

**Updates, decisions and actions from meeting**

## High Level Task Force on COVID-19 Vaccination

Monday 23 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
Liz Canavan, Chair, SOG on COVID-19	Gerry O'Brien, Health Protection Division, DOH
Dr Colm Henry, Chief Clinical Officer, HSE	Dr John Cuddihy, SRO WS5
Rachel Kenna, Chief Nursing Officer, DOH	Fran Thompson, SRO WS6
Derek McCormack, Expert on Cold Chain Logistics	David Leach, SRO WS7
Dermot Mulligan, Assistant Secretary, Innovation and Investment Division, DETE	Lyndsey Drea, Head of Comms, DOH
Dr Nuala O'Connor, ICGP	Eileen Hearne, Government Information Service
Dalton Philips, Chief Executive Officer, DAA	Siobhan McArdle, HSE
Martin Shanahan, Chief Executive Officer, IDA	Damien McCallion, National Director, HSE
Derek Tierney, Programme Director	Deirdre McNamara, General Manager, Quality & Patient Safety, Acute Hospitals Division, HSE
	Dónall Geoghegan, Joint Chief of Staff
	Deirdre Gillane, Chief of Staff
	Keiran Barbalich (PWC), Programme Office
	Michael Butler (PWC), Programme Office
	Fiona Smith (PWC), Programme Office

**Apologies:** Paul Quinn, Government CPO and CEO, OGP; Paul Reid, Chief Executive Officer, HSE; Dr Lorraine Nolan, Chief Executive, HPRA; Dr Ronan Glynn, Deputy CMO, DOH; Dr Lucy Jessop, SRO WS2, Director, NIO; Paul Flanagan, SRO WS3; David Walsh, SRO WS4; Deirdre Watters, Head of Communications, DOH.

## Updates, decisions and approvals by Task Force

At the meeting, the Task Force:

- Noted the significant numbers vaccinated to date as well as the current strong focus on maximising uptake and vaccinating the remaining age cohorts.
- Heard a communications update: public information campaigns are continuing, including those targeting specific audiences and topics (including special focus on Migrant Communities, Target Counties, Young Adults, Pregnancy & Fertility, Walk-in clinics and others); the @SciComm\_Collective continues to generate peer-to-peer content on vaccine myth busting and the Delta variant. News coverage last week included vaccination of 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, including Amárach research showing that 61% of respondents with children aged 12-15 will 'definitely' get them vaccinated.
- Heard a programme update: 6.6m vaccine doses have now been administered (ca. 90.4% of adults/86.1% of eligible population at least dose 1; ca. 85.2%/77.3% fully vaccinated); ca. 224K vaccines were administered last week; the CMO letter with recommendations on heterologous vaccines was received; vaccination of those aged 12-15 continues; further walk-in clinics were held over the weekend; the latest HPRSA safety update (Issue 10) has been released; and planning for the booster programme is continuing. Plans for w/c 23 August include administration of ca.150K vaccines.
- Reviewed current topics:
  - Uptake enhancement, including flexible access measures, demographic/geographic profile of unvaccinated and focus on those aged 16-29;
  - International redistribution of vaccines not required for remainder of national programme –this includes excess stock held by manufacturers, excess vaccines currently in storage in the national cold-chain facility, and distributed stock.
  - Completion of current programme;
- Considered a programme status report, noting that work remains ongoing across all workstreams, including WS1 (ongoing scenario analysis); WS2/3 (first additional Pfizer doses received; policy recommendations on heterologous vaccines and ongoing NIAC considerations on the booster programme; and APA with Sanofi); WS4 (completed vaccination of those over 70 that are housebound and ongoing vaccination of remaining cohorts, including socially vulnerable, with 43 VCs and two satellite VCs in operation); WS6 (testing of Sprint 13 underway).
- Discussed Integrated Operational Planning, with a strong focus on uptake enhancement, including:
  - EU context: extremely strong uptake among adults relative to other EU/EEA countries: Ireland ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> after Malta;
  - Age-specific incidence: highest among those aged 16-29;
  - Age cohort progress: registration ongoing for those aged 12-15 – 51% registered to date; registration continuing to rise among those aged 16-17 – currently 72% - and those aged 30-39, currently 90%; uptake among adults

- extremely high and vaccination of younger age groups ongoing with plans to map progress of vaccination programme in those age groups;
  - Uptake for those aged 16-29 (846K people): status on 19/22 August- 81%/82% registered, 77.7%/78.3% at least dose 1, 53%/56.9% fully vaccinated;
  - Geographic spread: high uptake across country
  - Uptake enhancements: walk-in weekends; campaigns to promote access through pharmacies in areas of high disease prevalence; multiple targeted communications campaigns; specific public health plans - e.g., sectoral/ employer engagement; area-specific initiatives;
  - Overview of targeted communications campaigns, including vaccination of those aged 12-15 and the focus on parents; radio and TV campaigns targeting those aged 18-25; and campaigns with a special focus on pregnancy and fertility, walk-in clinics, young adults, target counties, and migrant communities.
- Discussed vaccine supply and forecast, noting that Pfizer has requested EU approval to extend vaccine expiry from 6 to 9 months, and that it is working on single-shot, ready-to-use vaccines for 2022; also noted that the first of the two expected large Pfizer deliveries arrived last week with a similarly sized delivery due this week before a return to smaller deliveries.
  - Noted under medium-term issues that CMO recommendations on heterologous vaccines have been received and operationalisation planning by the HSE is ongoing, and that NIAC considerations are ongoing in relation to the booster programme.
  - Reviewed operational performance, including the scorecard (simplified, reflecting removal of AZ and Janssen from the programme); rolling 7-day cumulative total (under 250K for last three weeks); and a heat map of incidence rates (vast majority of cases in those aged 19-24; monitoring incidence in those over 65).
  - Noted, in summary, the focus on uptake enhancement; the particular focus on vaccination of the 16-29 age group; ongoing work on the international redistribution of vaccines not required for remainder of national programme; and ongoing work towards completion of the current programme
  - Agreed that the next meeting will take place on Monday 30 August at 2pm.