



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

High Level Task Force on COVID-19 Vaccination

18th January 2021 Meeting

Updates, decisions and actions from meeting

High Level Task Force on COVID-19 Vaccination

Monday 18th January 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	<i>i. Task Force Secretariat</i>
Prof Karina Butler, Chair, NIAC	Kate Waterhouse, Task Force Secretariat
Liz Canavan, Chair, SOG on COVID-19	<i>ii. In Attendance</i>
Fergal Goodman, Assistant Secretary, Health Protection Division, DOH	Sean Bresnan, National Director of Procurement, HSE
Dr Colm Henry, Chief Clinical Officer, HSE	Dr Lorraine Doherty, Clinical Director Health Protection, HSE
Dr Tony Holohan, Chief Medical Officer, DOH	Dr Ronan Glynn, Deputy CMO, DOH
Rachel Kenna, Chief Nursing Officer, DOH	Gerry O'Brien, Director, Health Protection, DOH
Barry Lowry, Chief Information Officer, OGCI	Deirdre Watters, Head of Communications, DOH
Derek McCormack, Expert on Cold Chain Logistics	Dr Lucy Jessop, SRO WS2, Director, NIO, HSE
Dermot Mulligan, Assistant Secretary, Innovation and Investment Division, DETE	David Walsh, SRO WS4
Lorraine Nolan, Chief Executive, HPRA	Dr John Cuddihy, SRO WS5
Dr Nuala O'Connor, ICGP	Fran Thompson, SRO WS6
Dalton Philips, Chief Executive Officer, DAA	Elizabeth Headon, SRO WS7
Paul Quinn, Government CPO and CEO, OGP	David Leach, SRO WS7
Paul Reid, Chief Executive Officer, HSE	Robert Watt, Interim Secretary General, DOH
Martin Shanahan, Chief Executive Officer, IDA	Minister Stephen Donnelly, Minister for Health
Derek Tierney, Programme Director	<i>iii. Programme support</i>
	Michael McDaid (PWC), Programme Office
	Yvonne Mowlds (PWC), Programme Office

2. Updates, decisions and approvals by Task Force

At the meeting, the Task Force:

- Reviewed an update on actions, with good progress noted on advancing the process in relation to the role of GPs/pharmacists in the vaccination programme, including the expectation that the Government will approve proposed arrangements tomorrow, and on possible additional inputs to data reporting. Three further actions were completed: development of a COVID-19 Programme Planning Roadmap to support DOH & HSE in the rollout of the vaccination programme; communication of NIAC advice on the number of Pfizer-BioNTech doses in vials and on the interval between doses to relevant stakeholders; and finalisation and dissemination of the HSE framework for prioritisation of Cohort 2 sub-groups following consultation, which includes advice on ensuring the availability of standby lists for the redistribution of unused doses to HCWs on the basis of prioritisation.
- Heard a communications update, including on the very high levels of media and public interest in the vaccination programme and key news events, roll-out of press ads, publication of vaccination data on the COVID hub, ongoing briefing of Oireachtas members, preparations for a meeting of the Joint Health Committee on 29 January, and preparation of further ads on recruitment and vaccination of Cohort 3.
- Heard an update on the vaccination programme, noting key milestones and issues, including achieving the targeted number of vaccinations for w/e 17 January (40,100) - final numbers to be confirmed shortly; the arrival of the first Moderna vaccine doses and of additional Pfizer BioNTech doses; application for authorisation of the AstraZeneca vaccine; ongoing training of vaccinators with ca. 4,000 having completed training; updating of information and consent materials to reflect change in interval between Pfizer BioNTech doses from 21 to 28 days; issuing of guidance on prioritisation of HCWs; administration of second doses of the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine; and the successful establishment of the first 'pop-up' Mass Vaccination Centres (MVCs) on 16 January, where 1,800 primary care staff were vaccinated with the Moderna vaccine.
- Discussed upcoming planned activity, noting the disruption to the supply of the Pfizer vaccine (due to regulatory Issues associated with modifications at a Pfizer plant aimed at increasing overall production capacity to year end), which is necessitating a review of the planned acceleration of the programme, with further information expected later this evening; and the impact of outbreaks on the roll-out to LTCFs, including the need for ongoing public health advice.
- Noted good progress on the programme overall, with green RAG status for the initial rollout phase, notwithstanding challenges and risks, including those to the supply chain due to the just-in-time delivery model; the scale-up of workforce and Vaccine Administration Locations (VALs); IT readiness and adoption by end-users; and data vulnerability; as well as due to the third wave of infections. Also noted news reports from Norway on post-vaccination deaths; on the basis that there was no known causation between the vaccine and the deaths, which were temporally-related deaths of very frail, elderly people, the HSE, based on NIAC advice, issued advice to vaccination teams and GPs in relation to vaccination and life expectancy.
- Reviewed status updates on all workstreams, and discussed a number of matters under WS6 (Enabling Technology & Information), including management of data

backlogs and data capture going forward; recording and cross-checking doses administered and those vaccinated; the work underway on vaccination certification; the scaling up of support for GP vaccination sites; functionality across a number of areas; and a 'lessons learned' exercise underway; and agreed the importance of communicating assurance about how well the system is working.

- Discussed workforce and vaccination sites, which are now the two main areas of focus, noting the success and very positive experiences of the first MVCs at the weekend as well as insights gained in relation to the resources required for MVCs; considered modelled scenarios on workforce requirements going forward and their underlying assumptions, and noted that detailed engagement and planning are ongoing; and agreed that any workforce support required from across the civil and public service would be identified and sought as soon as possible.
- Discussed the next phase of the vaccination programme (Feb-Mar), noting the high reliance on key assumptions about supply holding true, which would see finalisation of first and second doses in LTCFs, continued rollout for front-line HCWs, commencement of Cohort 3 vaccination, and a steep rise in workforce and VALs, including establishment of further MVCs. Also noted that the DOH/NIAC is keeping the initial vaccine allocation strategy under review.
- Discussed the indicative operational scorecard under development and agreed that a slide on the scorecard would be circulated after the meeting.
- Was addressed by Minister Stephen Donnelly, who thanked everyone for the work done to date and noted Ireland's top ranking in the EU table of vaccination programmes. He also requested responses to a range of questions on the vaccination programme.
- Agreed that the next meeting will take place on Monday, 25 January at 2pm.

New actions agreed by Task Force – 18 January

#	Action	Owner
1	Engage with state agencies and Public Appointment Service to seek support as HSE builds out its broader vaccination workforce	Prof Brian MacCraith, Derek Tierney, Liz Canavan
2	Circulate indicative operational scorecard slide to the TF.	Derek Tierney.