

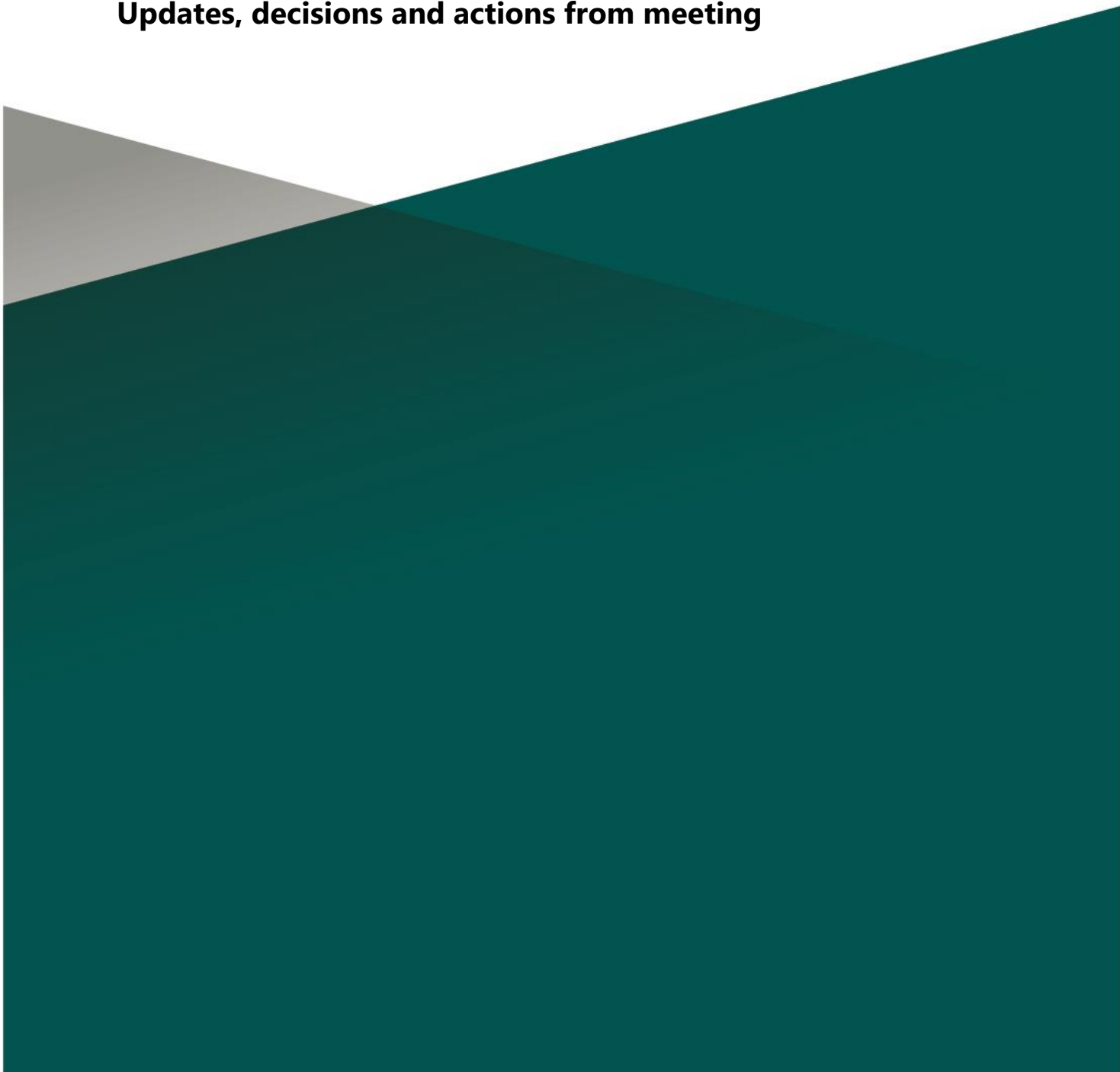


Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

# High Level Task Force on COVID-19 Vaccination

## 19 April 2021 Meeting

**Updates, decisions and actions from meeting**



## High Level Task Force on COVID-19 Vaccination

**Monday 19 April 2021 14:00**

Updates, decisions and actions arising from meeting

### 1. Attendees

<b>A. Members in attendance</b>	<b>B. Additional attendees in support</b>
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 Lorraine Doherty, Clinical Director Health Protection, HSE
Fergal Goodman, Assistant Secretary, Health Protection Division, DOH	Dr Ronan Glynn, Acting CMO, DOH
Dr Colm Henry, Chief Clinical Officer, HSE	Gerry O'Brien, Director, Health Protection, DOH
Rachel Kenna, Chief Nursing Officer, DOH	Deirdre Watters, Head of Communications, DOH
Barry Lowry, Chief Information Officer, OGCI	Dr Lucy Jessop, SRO WS2, Director, NIO
Derek McCormack, Expert on Cold Chain Logistics	David Walsh, SRO WS4
Dermot Mulligan, Assistant Secretary, Innovation and Investment Division, DETE	Dr John Cuddihy, SRO WS5
Dr Nuala O'Connor, ICGP	Fran Thompson, SRO WS6
Lorraine Nolan, Chief Executive, HPRA	David Leach, SRO WS7
Dalton Philips, Chief Executive Officer, DAA	Eileen Hearne, Government Information Service
Paul Quinn, Government CPO and CEO, OGP	Damien McCallion, National Director, HSE
Paul Reid, Chief Executive Officer, HSE	Deirdre McNamara, General Manager, Quality & Patient Safety, Acute Hospitals Division, HSE
Martin Shanahan, Chief Executive Officer, IDA	Minister Stephen Donnelly TD, Minister for Health
Derek Tierney, Programme Director	Michael McDaid (PWC), Programme Office
	Yvonne Mowlds (PWC), Programme Office
	Fiona Smith (PWC), Programme Office

## 2. Updates, decisions and approvals by Task Force

At the meeting, the Task Force:

- Noted that last week's meeting was postponed and later cancelled due to a number of matters requiring rapid adjustment of the operational programme (AZ use; Janssen pause; accelerated delivery of Pfizer doses).
- Reviewed open actions and near-term issues. Open actions being progressed include a workforce reporting template, an update on which is discussed in the meeting, and an overlay map of all vaccination sites, which is in preparation. Near-term issues being progressed include the approach to vaccinating minority communities and vulnerable groups and confirmation of cohort population sizes; and the role of pharmacists in the vaccination programme, which is undergoing adjustment in line with the overall programme.
- Heard a communications update: the focus of the Public Information Campaign is on rollout to those aged 65-69 and continued rollout to other cohorts, including radio and print ads; upcoming events include finalization of first doses for those over 70 and registration of those aged 60-64 later in the month; daily political updates are ongoing, regular post-Cabinet statements will commence tomorrow, and NIAC is due to appear before the Oireachtas tomorrow; news events include NIAC recommendations on AZ, pausing of the Janssen vaccine, the Pfizer announcement on accelerated delivery, and continuation of vaccinations to those that are housebound; while research continues to show steady vaccine uptake attitudes. An overview was also given of the whole-of-government communications strategy on COVID-19, with vaccination as an integrated element.
- Heard a programme update: a significant adaptation of the delivery model was undertaken following NIAC advice on the use of AZ, and the Janssen pause. As at 17 April, against a backdrop of ongoing supply instability, 1,203,630 doses had been administered (ca. 22% received at least one dose; ca. 9% received 2 doses); two days last week saw the highest daily totals to date, with over 33,000 vaccines administered on 15 April. Substantial completion of dose 1s for over-70s is expected later this month, and rollout to housebound patients is continuing. Over 79,000 in cohort 4 have received a first dose, despite ongoing challenges in identifying patients. The online portal for registration was launched on 15 April with ca.126,000 65-69 year-olds registered to date and ca.17,000 appointments issued, and vaccine administration to this cohort is due to start on 20 April.
- Discussed current issues, including the EMA review of AZ and Janssen vaccines, with an announcement expected imminently; Q3/Q4 supply, for which only rough estimates are currently available; uptake of AZ and general risk of hesitancy - the need for information and reassurance for this cohort was reaffirmed (general communications and clinical at point of vaccination); and dosage interval – in addition to the ongoing review of vaccine data, any further consideration of intervals will depend on the forthcoming EMA findings, and any subsequent programme modelling.

- Discussed planned activity for w/c 19 April, which, subject to ongoing programme adjustments, includes administration of 140-160K vaccines, continued rollout to cohorts 3 and 4 (mRNA), and commencement of administration to those over 60 at vaccination centres (AZ). Reviewed a programme status report, noting significant ongoing re-planning to respond to AZ guidance and Janssen delays, and key risks, including ongoing supply uncertainty and unavailability of supply information for delivery model. Heard an update on programme workstreams, including enhancements to the GP model and advance notification (WS2); ongoing review of Janssen, announced acceleration of Pfizer doses, preliminary EU discussions on vaccine procurement for 2022/3 (WS3); and launch of public portal for 65-69s (WS4). Also heard a review of vaccine usage, and efforts to maintain current low levels of spoilage and waste at point of use.
- Reviewed NIAC recommendations on use of AZ and a presentation on the operational programme adjustments in light of this and pausing of the Janssen vaccine, which provided updates on:
  - the revised operational plan for Q2, including ongoing engagement with relevant stakeholders, risks and changed timelines; with accelerated vaccination of over-60s, six cohorts are now being vaccinated in parallel across all channels (GPs, hospitals, vaccination centres, community teams), with overall vaccination windows remaining largely the same bar the expectation that cohort 7 may now take slightly longer.
  - operational planning, including scheduling, for vaccination centres, with 28 centres to be up and running by 26 April;
  - workforce, with confirmation of sufficient capacity of vaccinator and non-vaccinator staff for each centre for the initial weeks, and on overview of the recruitment pipeline for the next 6 weeks;
  - IT, including high levels of registration through the public portal and ongoing issuing of appointments, as well as an overview of functionality deployed and under development.
- Heard from the Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly, who acknowledged the significant work done to adjust the vaccination programme in the last week.
- Discussed vaccine supply and forecast, noting significant adjustments to expected deliveries in the coming weeks across all vaccines and that some of these are likely to be revised again.
- Discussed medium-terms issues, including current NIAC considerations (ongoing reviews of safety and effectiveness) and ongoing work in relation to vaccine certification.
- Reviewed the updated operational performance scorecard and a graph illustrating the impact of the programme in vaccinated cohorts, which shows significantly reduced case numbers.

- Noted, in summary, the new EMA and NIAC guidance on AZ and the adjusted plan in response to this, the launch of the public registration portal and scheduling, noting the very significant IT achievements since December, and updates on the vaccination centres and workforce.
- Agreed that the next meeting of the HLTF will take place on 26 April at 2pm.