



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

# High Level Task Force on COVID-19 Vaccination

## 4 May 2021 Meeting

**Updates, decisions and actions from meeting**

**High Level Task Force on COVID-19 Vaccination**

**Tuesday 4 May 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	Deirdre Watters, Head of Communications, DOH
Dr Colm Henry, Chief Clinical Officer, HSE	Dr Lucy Jessop, SRO WS2, Director, NIO
Rachel Kenna, Chief Nursing Officer, DOH	Paul Flanagan, SRO WS3
Barry Lowry, Chief Information Officer, OGCI	David Walsh, SRO WS4
Derek McCormack, Expert on Cold Chain Logistics	Dr John Cuddihy, SRO WS5
Dermot Mulligan, Assistant Secretary, Innovation and Investment Division, DETE	Fran Thompson, SRO WS6
Dr Nuala O'Connor, ICGP	David Leach, SRO WS7
Lorraine Nolan, Chief Executive, HPRA	Mark Brennock, National Director of Communications, HSE
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	Anna Conlon, Special Advisor
Martin Shanahan, Chief Executive Officer, IDA	Deirdre Gillane, Special Advisor
Derek Tierney, Programme Director	Brian Murphy, Special Advisor
	Keiran Barbalich (PWC), Programme Office
	Yvonne Mowlds (PWC), Programme Office

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

At the meeting, the Task Force:

- Noted significant achievements in the past week, with over 1.6m doses administered to date – almost 200,000 in the past week and over 44,000 last Friday alone, with another big week expected this week; and that work remains ongoing on operational models to implement the new NIAC recommendations.
- Reviewed open actions, including readiness of WS5 to provide weekly reports on vaccine uptake and impact for circulation to HLTF and a report to be provided next week on length of time taken per vaccination and implication for throughput in resource model; and near-term issues, including progress in relation to the role of pharmacists, which is intertwined with adjustments to the operational model.
- Heard a communications update: Public Information Campaigns include a national and local radio and digital campaign following Government's announcement on 29 April; self-registration for those aged 60-64 and invitation to register for those aged 50-59 (ca. 320K registered); and the HSE TV campaign to be back on air next weekend. Other highlights include ongoing daily publication of vaccine stats and high traffic to vaccine-related content on the HSE website and gov.ie. On political communications, daily updates and post-Cabinet statements continue, while Dáil statements on the vaccine rollout are scheduled for this Thursday. News coverage has included the successful rollout of online and phone registrations, the latest NIAC recommendations, vaccine delivery schedules, vaccine dividend, and the easing of restrictions, while research continues to show positive vaccine uptake attitudes.
- Reviewed a programme update and noted key milestones achieved: 1,619,214 vaccines administered to 3 May, with ca.30% having received Dose 1 and ca. 11.4% of adults fully vaccinated; last week was the biggest week for the vaccination programme to date, with over 195K vaccinations administered and the highest daily total of over 44K vaccines; 30 VCs are now operational and administration to those aged 60-69 commenced last week, as well as online registration for 60-64 year-olds. Work is ongoing on the operationalisation of the latest NIAC recommendations. It was agreed that additional vaccination pathway statistics are being developed (cohort size, registration, uptake/non-attendance (DNAs)) and that these will be reported on periodically.
- Acknowledged significant achievements by WS6, noting the successful go-live of Sprint 8 on 30 April with ca.150 functional enhancements in such areas as clinic appointments and management, the public portal and scheduling; large numbers of registrations have been recorded across all ages with the vast majority via the portal. Heard an update related to changes in VC check-in/process and resourcing, which will continue to be adjusted in line with operational experience and lessons learned.
- Noted current issues, including operationalization of the latest NIAC recommendations; supply volatility in Q2; supply certainty for Q3/Q4 and Pfizer's

application to the EMA for use of its vaccine in those aged 12-15. Also noted that the EMA has commenced a rolling review of the Sinovac vaccine.

- Discussed planned activity for w/c 3 May, including administration of 220-240K vaccines, phased opening of registration for those aged 50-59, and operationalisation and working through of new NIAC guidance in a re-baselined Q2 programme (workforce, delivery channels, VALs etc).
- Reviewed a programme status report, noting that supply remains the key challenge albeit with some stabilisation, and that work remains ongoing across all workstreams: engagement with customs to ensure smooth transitions as supplies increase (WS2); confirmation of (lower than expected) Janssen supply for May, EU discussions on vaccine procurement for 2022, 2023 and beyond, and work on broadening list of legal vaccinators via SI (WS3); ongoing vaccination of cohorts 2 (including new healthcare workers), 3 (including house- and hospital-bound patients) and 5 (in VCs) (WS4); successful deployment of Sprint 8 and Covax updates (WS6).
- Heard an update on and acknowledged the significant work and achievements of the HSE Live support, noting significantly increased resources to support the vaccination programme, including resources from Revenue and the Department of Social Protection, as well as the provision of Irish-language support, and support in respect of housebound patients and vaccine certification. There were over 17,000 calls on HSE Live's busiest day to date with further increases expected, up from an average of 400-500 daily calls last year; 44,000 people have registered for vaccination by phone with over 200,000 calls for support made.
- Reviewed the latest NIAC recommendations and HSE planning considerations based on these, including in relation to the use of the Janssen and AZ vaccines, AZ vaccine intervals and vaccination of pregnant women.
- Heard an update on and acknowledged the significant work undertaken and ongoing on Integrated Operational Planning, noting that reports are being developed on registration and uptake and that work is ongoing on operational planning that will incorporate the latest NIAC guidance; on VCs, it was noted that 30 VCs are currently operational with six more to open this week, that the average weekly targets for VCs are continuing to scale up (ca.20K this week), and that there ongoing adjustments to maximise the operation of VCs; on workforce readiness, it was noted that recruitment and onboarding of new staff is continuing, with intensive work continuing to maximise the workforce and ensure sufficient resources are available as the programme continues to scale up. Careful management of vaccine stock and distribution is continuing.
- Discussed vaccine supply and forecast, with further changes to the AZ and Janssen delivery schedules; in a 9-week look-ahead, distribution of Pfizer's accelerated increment is to be confirmed, while overall supply totals are expected to remain largely the same.

- Discussed medium-terms issues, including vaccine certificates, for which technological preparation is well advanced and policy work is ongoing, with a paper for Government expected shortly; and vaccine dividend, which includes the extension of nursing home visits from 4 May and new public health advice on indoor home visiting that will apply from 10 May; the TF also reviewed a summary of public health guidance on vaccinated status and noted that advice to the public will continue to focus on the outdoors and other public health measures.
- Reviewed the operational performance scorecard, noting continued high levels of administration efficiency and the potential need to adjust measurement of efficiency as the programme increases in complexity (multiple vaccines/delivery channels).
- Heard a further update on the positive impact of the vaccination programme to date (reduction in cases, outbreaks and deaths), and agreed that a report will be circulated regularly.
- Noted, in summary, new NIAC guidance on AZ, Janssen and Pfizer, the operational implications of the new guidance and ongoing adjustment to the plan, and the updated supply forecast for Q2.
- Agreed that the next meeting of the HLTF will take place on 10 May.

**New actions agreed by Task Force – 4 May**

#	Action	Owner
1	Registration, uptake and DNA data to be captured as part of operational reporting	David Walsh, Damien McCallion, Derek Tierney