

# **Joint Committee on Health**

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## **OPENING STATEMENT**

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Vaccination Process and Workforce

Friday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2021



## Introduction

Good morning Chairman and members. Thank you for the invitation to meet with the Joint Committee on Health to discuss the:

1. The roll-out of the Covid – 19 Vaccination Strategy
2. The Communications Strategy for the roll - out
3. The development of an ICT platform to deal with on-line registration and on creating a database of those who have been vaccinated.

I am joined today by my Colleagues:

- Dr Lucy Jessop, Director of Public Health, HSE National Immunisation Office,
- Mr Fran Thompson, Chief Information Officer, HSE.

The roll out of the Covid 19 vaccines will be a source of great relief and hope for people all over the country, particularly for older people, who have had to accept the greater risk to their health from COVID-19 and who have had to endure the consequences of social restrictions more than other groups in society. It is important to remember that these vaccines will enhance and not replace the public health measures which halt transmission of COVID-19. This disease is still a threat to health and to our health services, and we must do everything we can to slow its spread.

Vaccines are highly regulated products and the systems and processes put in place to distribute, administer and record the rollout of the vaccines reflect this.

Each vaccine must be considered by the European Medicines Agency who then issue conditional marketing authorization (CMA). On receipt of this information the National Immunization Advisory Committee (NIAC) makes recommendations- on the use of the vaccine in Ireland to the Department of Health. The HSE is then asked to implement those recommendations.

COVID-19 vaccine comes in multidose vials with specific time constraints and cold chains storage conditions for each vaccine. The National Immunisation Advisory Committee provide the scientific and other advice regarding the management of the vaccine and this advice is updated regularly as more evidence emerges both locally and internationally in relation to each vaccine. Each change in advice is rapidly actioned and updated guidance issued to vaccinators.

The National Immunisation Office (NIO) lead on vaccine supply and distribution. In addition, NIO develop and deliver training programmes for already experienced vaccinators- via live webinars and the HSE's training portal, HSEland.

The NIO produce training and information materials and distribute those materials as well as providing ongoing support to the process.

Digital enablement of the Covid Vaccine Programme is vital to its success. The vision is to have a fully digitally supported process from end to end covering all aspects of the vaccine programme.

This is a very challenging programme given the scope and timeframe for the vaccine rollout. We are delivering a national digital programme, which normally takes 6 months to deliver in 3 weeks.

Three main processes must be digitally enabled:-

- a. Pre Vaccine** – Citizen Registration Portal which will enable scheduling, booking and consent.
- b. Vaccine Administrating** – Validation of citizen Identity, Clinical Workflow, recording vaccine, recording any adverse reactions, scheduling follow up vaccine appointments and the production of a vaccine certificate.
- c. Reporting and Monitoring** – Reporting and management of data, Adverse reaction tracking.

This delivery of the system functionally is being undertaken in stages utilising an agile methodology, this process involves constant collaboration with the stakeholders and continuous improvement and iteration at every stage of the project. Integration to the Individual Health Identifier is critical to enable the HSE to safely administer the Vaccine. The IHI integration is now live on the solution.

The core element of the recording of the vaccine is operational since 29th December 2020. The system is operational across over 680 health care facilities across the health service and is being used by 3600 health care staff. The GP element of the ICT portal is now live, this facility allows GPs to register to receive the Covid-19 vaccine.

Once a person presents at the clinic for vaccination, they are validated by an admin staff member and then the person who is administering the vaccine records the details of the vaccination. The data is stored on the Salesforce solution.

The progress to date includes:

- The vaccination solution is integrated to the HSE service directory entries for over 2500 facilities including healthcare sites and new clinic locations.
- Individual Health Identifier (IHI) integration is available, enabling access to real time GP tables, Professional ID validation, Eircode validation.
- The team are working towards integration with GP systems to receive vaccine records.

Up to Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> January, the HSE has administered a total of 161,500 vaccines across a variety of settings including long term care and health care workers.

The HSE will continue to rollout the vaccine programme in line with the Government Strategy over the coming months in line with vaccine supply.

The HSE works in an integrated way with the High Level Vaccine Task Force and colleagues in the Department of Health, other Government Departments and a range of state, voluntary and private agencies to ensure that this critical programme is successfully delivered.

Thank you.