



National COVID-19 Vaccination Programme - General Practice

Operational Guidance for Vaccination in General Practice – People aged 70 and older

VERSION 5

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Overview & Introduction

COVID-19 is a highly infectious disease that can cause serious illness, hospitalisation and even death. The COVID-19 vaccination programme offers protection from COVID-19. If people do test positive for COVID-19 after vaccination, they should have increased levels of protection from the serious illness that the virus can sometimes cause. The aim in offering the vaccine to the population is to protect people and reduce the illness and deaths caused by this virus.

The vaccine is not mandatory. People who are most at risk from COVID-19 will get the vaccine first.

The COVID-19 vaccine is free to all persons of the State. It will not be available privately.

General Practitioners (GPs), who have already made a very significant positive contribution to efforts to manage this public health crisis since the outbreak of COVID-19 in the spring of 2020, will play a key role in the delivery of the vaccination programme in accordance with the agreed national vaccination schedule. In particular, GPs and Practice Nurses will have a key role in delivering the COVID-19 vaccination programme to persons aged 70 years and over as well as high-risk patients in the medical priority groups.

The COVID-19 Vaccine Allocation Strategy sets out a provisional priority list of groups for vaccination once a safe and effective vaccine(s) is authorised by the European Medicines Agency (EMA). Please see **Appendix 1** for a quick guide to the provisional vaccine allocation groups. The Strategy was developed by the National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) and the Department of Health, endorsed by the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHET), and approved by Government on 8 December 2020. The Strategy is a further component to the State's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and will evolve and adapt with more detailed information on the vaccines and their effectiveness.

This document sets out guidance in relation to the approach, logistical arrangements and processes established for the rollout of the vaccine programme to people aged over 70 years.

The National Immunisation Office (NIO) is the primary source of clinical guidelines about national immunisation programmes, including COVID-19. Please refer to its website regularly, as the NIO monitor and update information in relation to vaccinations. Please see:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/covid19vaccineinfo4hps/clinicalguidance.pdf>

Age Cohort > 70s

The total number of people in the population over the age of 70 years was 426,331 as of Census 2016. The population has grown in the intervening period and CSO projections for 2021 are:

People aged	85+	80-84	75-79	70-74
Number (000)	82.7	94.0	143.3	196.1
Cumulative (000)	82.7	176.7	320.0	516.1

Source: CSO (M1F2)

There will be people in the over 70 years age cohort included in the above numbers who have already been vaccinated in Residential Care Facilities (RCFs) or in acute hospital settings.



Based on GMS and other available information on vaccinations to date, the number to be vaccinated in the over 70 years age cohort (Group 3) is estimated to be in the order of 490,000.

Communications

HSE.ie has comprehensive information available on the vaccine for the people of Ireland including:

- Getting the vaccine
- Safety
- Immunity
- Side Effects
- Leaflets.

This information is available at: <https://www2.hse.ie/covid-19-vaccine/>

The HSE launched a focused communications campaign for the provision of COVID-19 vaccines to people aged 70+ years with their GPs, the weekend of the 30th/31st January 2021. The campaign is advising people that their GP will contact them to arrange an appointment and that the initial target group is those aged 85+ years.

Governance

The clinical governance for identifying the vaccine cohort, administering the vaccine and managing the person post-vaccine rests with the GP. Indemnity for GPs and practice nurses will be provided and will be subject of separate correspondence with the IMO.

Guidelines and information are available for the COVID-19 vaccines and include information such as how to administer the vaccine, the possible side effects, the management of anaphylaxis and FAQs, and these are available at:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/covid19vaccineinfo4hps/clinicalguidance.pdf>

GPs and Practice Nurses can direct clinical queries to the National Immunisation Office via immunisation@hse.ie

Training

Vaccines may be given by doctors and nurses. Nurses may administer vaccines under doctor or registered nurse practitioner prescription or under a medicine protocol within their scope of practice.

- In line with indemnity cover (as referenced above), doctors and nurses must complete the relevant online training course on HSEland before administering the COVID-19 vaccines.
- To take the training, doctors and nurses need to log in to www.hseland.ie to take the COVID-19 Vaccine Webinar Series.

Vaccine

Vaccine Types

Due to the demonstrated efficacy of mRNA vaccines in older persons and in recognition of their particular vulnerability in terms of their increased risk of death and serious disease if they contract COVID-19, it has been recommended that mRNA vaccines be administered to all those over 70 years in order to provide the highest level of protection available to this population.



Vaccine Logistics

	Pfizer BioNTech	Moderna
Logistics	Delivered fortnightly to GP practices	Delivered as available to GP practices
Presentation	Available in trays of 195 vials/may be packed into smaller batches	Available in boxes of 10 vials (minimum order - 100 doses)
Storage Temperature	Stored upright & in its box within the cold chain temperature range (2°C to 8°C) at GP practice. It can be used once it arrives at site	Delivered frozen & takes approx. 2.5 hours to thaw when stored upright within the cold chain temperature range (2°C to 8°C) at GP practice or 1 hour to thaw at room temperature for immediate use
Shelf Life	Can be stored in a refrigerator for up to 120 hours (including travel time) post thaw	Can be stored in refrigerator for up to 30 days (including travel time) post thaw
Use by Time once Vial is Punctured/ Diluted	Must be used within 6 hours of first puncture recorded on the vial label	Must be used within 6 hours of first puncture recorded on the vial label
Dose	0.3ml	0.5ml
Doses per Vial	6-7 doses per vial after dilution	10-11 doses per vial Not to be mixed with a diluent
Interval between 1st & 2nd Dose	2 doses required per person, a maximum of 4 weeks apart	2 doses required per person, a maximum of 4 weeks apart

The NIO is the primary source of clinical guidelines about national immunisation programmes, including COVID-19. Please refer to its website regularly, as the NIO monitor and update information in relation to vaccinations. Please see:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/covid19vaccineinfo4hps/clinicalguidance.pdf>

This site contains the specific information on the safe handling, reconstitution and administration of each vaccine and it has a very useful Quick Reference Guide to COVID 19 Vaccines available at: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/covid19vaccineinfo4hps/covid19vaccinereferenceguide.pdf>

Ordering Vaccine

The vaccine supply chain is managed by the NIO and the HSE National Cold Chain Service (NCCS). Onward delivery of the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine will be at a temperature of (2°C to 8°C) and onward delivery of the Moderna vaccine will be at a temperature of -25°C to -15°C to General Practices.

Deliveries of the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine will be via United Drug on a fortnightly rolling basis, 5 days per week (Monday-Friday). Practices need to be open to accept deliveries 5 days per week (Monday-Friday). The exact delivery date and day for each practice will be determined by the National Cold Chain Service and advised to GPs. Orders will need to be placed 10 days in advance. GPs will have access to a calendar on the online system indicating their scheduled delivery dates, deliver dates will include bank holidays.

GPs **must** ensure that people receive a second dose of the same vaccine that they received as their first dose.

The approach envisaged is that each GP practice receives deliveries aligned with the profile of their patient cohort. By means of example, it is intended that a GP with patients within all sub-groups of cohort 3 (>70s) will receive 6 deliveries, with each delivery 2 weeks apart. This approach is to ensure in so far as possible that vaccine supply is mapped to the age category schedule.



- Delivery 1: Dose 1 for those aged over 85 years
- Delivery 2: Dose 1 for those aged between 80 and 84 years
- Delivery 3: Dose 1 for those aged between 75 and 79 years and Dose 2 for those aged over 85 years
- Delivery 4: Dose 1 for those aged between 70 and 74 years and Dose 2 for those aged between 80 and 84 years
- Delivery 5: Dose 2 for those aged between 75 and 79 years
- Delivery 6: Dose 2 for those aged between 70 and 74 years.

It is not possible to provide people with a choice as to their preferred mRNA vaccine. They can only be offered the vaccine that has been made available to the GP practice. The NIO/HSE allocates vaccines based on the availability of vaccines and the delivery schedule.

(a) GP Practices

General Practices can order through the NCCS via gpvaccines@hse.ie. On initial rollout, General Practices are to order enough vaccines so that they can administer safely to their cohort of patients aged 85+ years. GPs should order the number of doses required. The numbers ordered will be cross checked by the NIO. A minimum order of 6 vials/36 doses for Pfizer BioNTech or 10 vials/100 doses for Moderna applies. Dose 2 will not be delivered automatically and must be ordered separately to dose 1. If a GP is uncomfortable meeting the schedule as the rollout progresses, they are to contact vaccines@udd.ie to check if they can adjust their orders.

(b) Hubs

For those smaller list sizes (under 200 over 70s) many of which are in large urban areas, there will be a GP Run Vaccination Clinic at an agreed locations such as Dublin, Galway and Cork.

Example:

- The first hub will be DCU, Dublin where 121 practices in the Dublin area, who have fewer than 200 over 70s in total will come together to run vaccination clinics for their patients (over 85s for Clinic 1).
- This will be operated by GPs, Practice Nurses and Administration staff who will do sessions and be led by a Lead GP to organise rotas and scheduling.
- All booking, registration and payment for a GP's own patients will be via their own practice management system – the only change is the venue at which the patient will receive the vaccine.
- The clinics will operate in the agreed age phases until all these patients are vaccinated and at the 28 day intervals.
- These clinics will operate at weekends.

(c) GP' Buddying Up

Where a 'buddying up' system applies (see under Scheduling), the GP Practice from where all vaccinations are to be administered, must place the order with the NCCS. This GP Practice will act as the Receiving Point and Administration Site for multiple GP Practices.

Records in relation to the patient administration and vaccine administered are to be recorded in the patient's own GP's patient records.



Vaccine Storage in General Practice

A calibrated pharmaceutical fridge and temperature monitoring procedures must be in place to store vaccines. Pfizer BioNTech and Moderna can be maintained within the cold chain temperature range (2°C to 8°C). The Pfizer BioNTech vaccine may be stored for up to 120 hours (including travel time) at GP surgeries and the Moderna vaccine may be stored for up to 30 days.

The Moderna vaccine will arrive frozen at a temperature of at -25°C to -15°C. Each pack contains 10 vials. Vials should be transferred to +2°C to +8°C to thaw which may take 2 and a half hours, and must sit at room temperature for 15 minutes before administering. Alternatively, frozen vials may be thawed for 1 hour at room temperature between +15°C to +25°C for immediate use. Once thawed, the vaccine cannot be re-frozen.

The Pfizer BioNTech vaccine is transported at temperatures +2°C to +8°C and can be used once it arrives at the site.

GP Practices will need to ensure that vaccines are stored securely at all points between receipt and use or disposal. Waste vaccines and empty vials must be disposed of into sharps bins according to normal local waste management procedures. Original cartons must have their labels defaced using permanent black marker pens, and placed into appropriate non-healthcare waste health stream, as soon as possible after they become empty. The GPs must give an account of vaccine vials used and doses that they administer per vial.

Each delivery point must return a reconciliation form to the NIO prior to their next delivery for traceability purposes and to record wastage. A sample reconciliation form for Pfizer BioNTech is available at:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/covid19vaccineinfo4hps/covidvaccinesop.pdf>

Vaccine Equipment for General Practice

A national distribution service (JMC Logistics) will deliver PPE and critical clinical and non-clinical consumables. These will be delivered one day ahead of the arrival of the vaccine, in the required quantities to match the quantity of vaccine ordered. **GPs should already have anaphylaxis kits in their practices. Saline orders will be linked to Pfizer BioNTech orders.**

The following generic equipment will be delivered (as of the 9.2.21):

- 5 litre Sharps Container
- Cotton Wool
- Tape
- Surface Wipe
- Kidney Dishes
- Hand Disinfectant
- Masks
- Medium Gloves
- Tissues
- Large Black Sacks
- 10 Inch Paper Roll

The following equipment will be delivered for Moderna (as of the 9.2.21):

- 23G X 25MM Needle
- 1ml Syringe (Luer Lock / Luer Slip)
- Alcohol Swabs



The following equipment will be delivered for Pfizer BioNTech (as of the 9.2.21):

- 23G X 25MM Needle
- 21G X 38MM Needle
- 1ml Syringe (Luer Lock / Luer Slip)
- 3ml Luer Cone Syringe
- Alcohol Swabs

Vaccine Information for General Practice

In line with vaccine orders, the NIO will provide printed information to GPs and Practice Nurses who are involved in the vaccine administration rollout. This information includes a HSE leaflet, patient information leaflet (PIL) from the manufacturer, aftercare leaflet and record card. These will be delivered in advance of vaccine.

For the most up to date information for GP and Practice Nurses, please see:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/covid-19-vaccine-materials/covid-19-vaccine-materials.html> and <https://www2.hse.ie/covid-19-vaccine/>

Scheduling

Rollout of the vaccine programme will be slow and steady, in line with the availability of the Pfizer BioNTech and Moderna vaccines. The priority cohort is the over 85s and General Practices with large numbers of patients aged over 85 years will be targeted in the early phase of the rollout.

Practice Premises Requirements

All GMS and Under 6 GP Contract Holders will already be meeting the premises standards as set out in those contracts but in addition to same, in order to provide the COVID-19 vaccines in a safe and efficient manner, Practices will require the following:

The premises must be able to accommodate the following separate areas:

- Registration/Reception area for patients - sufficient to allow for social distancing.
- Reconstitution of vaccine and refrigeration area.
- Vaccination area for patients.
- Observation area for patients - This need not be within the practice building but on the practice grounds and must allow for social distancing.

GPs must have a vaccine fridge and must be able to certify that the fridge meets required minimum requirements. Practices should ensure that their fridge's temperature logger is operational.

Practice Staff Requirements

The Practice must be able to provide, at a minimum, the following personnel:

- One administration staff member for registration.
- One administration staff member for observation area.
- Where clinics are being run by a single handed GP, there must be another suitably qualified person in attendance i.e. another GP or Nurse.
- Where clinics are being run by multiple GPs, they should ensure that there are also other suitably qualified persons in attendance.



GP Led Vaccination Clinics In agreed location outside of surgery premises and ‘Buddying Up’ system within General Practice

- GP Led Vaccination Clinics for those smaller list sizes (under 200 over 70s), many of which are in large urban areas. There are to be GP Run Vaccination Clinics at agreed locations such as Dublin, Galway and Cork.
- These are to be operated by GPs, Practice Nurses and Admin staff who will do sessions and be led by a Lead GP to organise rotas and scheduling.
- All booking, registration and payment for patients will be via their GPs’ practice management systems – the only change is the venue at which the patient will receive the vaccine.
- The clinics will operate in the agreed age phases until all these patients are vaccinated and at the 28 day intervals.
- These clinics will operate at weekends.

GP ‘Buddying Up’ System

GPs who have less than 200 patients on the Over 70 age category will be assisted in ‘buddying up’ with a larger practice in the area. In this way, the small patient numbers from one practice will attend at the larger practice for vaccination. Vaccination may be delivered by either the patient’s own GP team or the practice team of the ‘buddy’ practice. Contact will be made by the IMO with those practices to assist them with the ‘buddying-up’ system.

Where a ‘buddy up’ system applies, the GP Practice from where all vaccinations are to be administered must place the order on the National Cold Chain Service. This GP Practice will act as Receiving Point and Administration Site for multiple GP Practices. The NIO will then log the vaccine order back to the relevant Practices.

Where buddying up is not possible, arrangements will be made to facilitate GPs and patients for the most appropriate route.

Preparation for Rollout

In preparation for the rollout, GPs should validate their lists of patients aged over 85 years. Please see **Appendix Two** for a Sample Checklist for Preparing for COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics.

If possible, GPs and Practice Nurses with recent prior vaccination experience should provide the COVID-19 vaccines.

GPs and Practice Nurses should aim to vaccinate people as soon as the vaccine is delivered (to reduce the risk of vaccines being spoiled if not stored correctly) and in all cases no longer than the guidelines. The following cohorts of people, as per their age group, are to be prioritised in the order listed below:

- 85+ years
- 80-84 years
- 75-79 years
- 70-74 years

Contingency List

It is important that each GP and Practice Nurse holds a frequently updated contingency list. This contingency list should include people within the target age group cohorts that are on standby and can travel to the GP practice within a 1-hour timeframe e.g. if a GP/Practice Nurse is vaccinating from a day list of over 85s, the contingency list might also include those from the over 85 category and from the 80-84 years category subject to the guidance that the priority order is followed.



It is vital that contingency lists are managed well to avoid the non-use of prepared vaccine.

Emergency Cover

GPs and Practice Nurses should have emergency cover arranged with a colleague in case of any reason where they are unable to attend their practice to provide the vaccines.

General Practitioners with no current contract with the HSE

GPs who wish to provide the vaccines to their patients but have no current contracts with the HSE may contact the National Contract's Office at NatcontractsOffice@hse.ie to register.

Other Scenarios

This guidance document is outlining the vaccination programme for the majority of people aged over 70 years with their GPs; there will be scenarios where a different approach may be required e.g. a domiciliary visit to provide the vaccine or a person residing in another area, away from their local GP practice. These scenarios will be reviewed and guidance communicated once the initial rollout has commenced.

Workflow Considerations

It is envisaged that Practices will:

- Identify priority patients and ensure that they require vaccination (*e.g. is their first shot due? have they already been vaccinated? if so, what vaccine was administered and when is next shot due?*)
- Set up initial and follow-on vaccination clinics/timeslots (*e.g. Monday 10-11:30am and same 28 days later*)
- Contact patients with indicative appointment times
- Order vaccines via National Cold Chain Service (orders will be subject to minimum ordering)
 - GPs must place their order of doses with the National Cold Chain Service at least 10 days in advance of their scheduled delivery date.
- Be informed of the vaccine ETA (*e.g. 200 doses to arrive next Monday*)
- Contact patients to confirm appointment times
- Receive vaccines and saline (in the case of Pfizer) at the same time.
- Check, verify and accept
- Store correctly in fridge
- Enter vaccines & saline (as relevant) on GP practice system (with batch number and expiry date)
- Administer vaccines
- Pre-clinic setup (*e.g. stock control, patient/clinic list*)
- Patient arrival/reception
- Patient registration (*e.g. verify and update PPSN, mobile phone number and email address*)
- Verify patient consent and eligibility
- Vaccinate patient
- Record and save details on the patient record
- Submit electronic vaccination details to the COVID-19 Immunisation System (CIS) (via Healthlink)
- Submit electronic payment claim details to the PCERS (via Healthlink)
- Post-clinic wrap up (*e.g. number of patients vaccinated, stock used/returned to fridge/cannot be used*)
- Patient waits 15 minutes
- Treat and record any immediate adverse reactions (*e.g. HPRA process*)
- Book appointment for 2nd dose (*if applicable*)



- Produce patient record card and give to patient with details of next appointment
- Opportunistically vaccinate other patients (*e.g. make use of vaccines that will otherwise expire*)
- Treat and record any later adverse reactions (*e.g. HPRA process*)
- Process electronic vaccinations received from the CIS (*e.g. patient vaccinated in a hospital or nursing home*)
- Process any electronic vaccination/payment rejections (*e.g. practice staff to correct the details and re-submit, with only the corrected message(s) being sent*).

Administering

For the most up to date information on the administration of the Pfizer BioNTech and Moderna vaccines, please see:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/covid19vaccineinfo4hps/clinicalguidance.pdf>

Recovery

Scheduling of people should allow for a safe space to observe the person for 15 minutes after the vaccine (30 minutes if they have a history of allergic reactions). The GP/Practice Nurse should ensure that the person is provided with evidence of vaccination and aftercare information.

The GP/Practice Nurse must be aware of signs and symptoms of adverse reactions and manage any that arise.

The HPRA must be informed using the Adverse Reaction Report (Yellow) Card System available at: www.hpra.ie

The contraindications and precautions to vaccination, as per the recommendations of the National Immunisation Advisory Committee, are detailed in the clinical guidelines. These are available at: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/covid19vaccineinfo4hps/clinicalguidance.pdf>

Consent

For specific information on consent, please see Consent for Vaccination for COVID-19: Guiding Principles at: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid-19-nursing-home-resources/consent-for-vaccination-for-covid-19.pdf>

Please also see webinar with Philip Crowley at: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/qid/other-quality-improvement-programmes/consent/supportingtheconsentprocesscovid19.html>

The updates to the GP Practice Management Systems will allow the GP/Practice Nurse to record that the patient has consented (i.e. consent = yes or 'for their benefit and according to will and preference' as per **Appendix Three** below). The patient's medical eligibility must be assessed before consent. The consent and eligibility indicators will be sent electronically to the COVID-19 Immunisation System (CIS) along with details of the vaccine administered, on an almost real-time basis.

The GP/Practice Nurse should record if a patient does not consent & the reason for non-consent, (where such reason is given) as applicable, on the patient's record on the GP's own Practice Management System.



ICT

A national ICT Solution is needed to support the GP administered COVID-19 vaccination programme, and this will be delivered in phases.

On Monday 1st February, the National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) and Chief Medical Officer recommended that people aged 70 and over should receive mRNA vaccines from Pfizer or Moderna “where practical and timely”, instead of receiving the AstraZeneca viral vector vaccine as previously planned and this was approved by Stephen Donnelly, Minister for Health. Arising from that decision, the GP vaccination solution was enhanced in order to support the use of Pfizer and/or Moderna vaccines, in addition to the AstraZeneca vaccine.

Initial Phase

During the **initial phase**, which will commence on Monday 15th February 2021, GP practice staff will use their enhanced accredited practice systems to record the vaccinations of those aged 70 years and older.

This will enable GPs to:

- Register people for the new COVID-19 vaccination programme
- Record their PPSN and contact details¹
- Record their eligibility and consent
- Set up the COVID-19 vaccines and related schedules
- Record stocks of vaccines as they are delivered
- Record the batch number and ‘use by’ date² of each vaccine administered
- For Pfizer vaccinations, record also the batch number and ‘use by’ date of the saline solution diluent (which comes with the vaccine) in the text box provided
- Automatically communicate electronic vaccination details to the new Covid Immunisation System (via Healthlink)
- Automatically communicate electronic payment claims to the PCERS (via Healthlink)³

Please do not enter any “test” vaccinations on your GP practice system as these will be treated as bona fide vaccinations for the individual selected. If you do, the vaccination details will be submitted to the national COVID Immunisation System and will be included in official vaccination figures released to the national media. An electronic payment claim will also be submitted to the PCERS with the result that any future duplicate claim will be rejected. Instead please only enter actual vaccinations administered.

The GP Covid-19 vaccination solution is designed to be used in ‘real time’, with data being entered as work is completed and patients are vaccinated.

If called upon to vaccinate your own patients off-site, please set up everything in advance on your practice system (*e.g. patient registrations, appointments*). If you can access your own practice system remotely and securely from the vaccination location, please do so and enter data in ‘real time’ as if you were working in your own practice. Otherwise, please bring a list/spreadsheet of your appointment(s) to the vaccination location, and record the vaccinations administered on paper or in the spreadsheet. Data entry should be done as soon as possible after you get back to your practice to

¹ If the service user doesn’t have a mobile phone and/or email address, please include the contact details for their carer, next of kin, or enter “087 1234567” and/or “none@hse.ie” in the short term.

² A ‘Use By’ date for each Pfizer and Moderna vaccine is assigned when the item is removed from the freezer. This date should be recorded in the ‘Expiry Date’ field in the short term.

The next software release (planned for late February) will resolve both of these issues.

³ There is no paper-based payment claim form needed, as claims are automatically submitted electronically.



facilitate the accurate and timely reporting of COVID vaccinations nationally.

Subsequent Phases

In subsequent phases, a more comprehensive, functionally rich and integrated solution that supports the longer term needs of this programme will be developed and implemented (i.e. 'layered on'). It wasn't possible to provide every function needed in the first phase, due to the short timeframe within which we're working.

Technical Support

GP Practices can find a range of supports related to the system upgrade and COVID-19 vaccination software here in the table below.

Technical Support			
<u>Support Team</u>	<u>Email Address</u>	<u>Phone Number</u>	<u>Operating Hours</u>
Socrates	support@clanwilliamhealth.com	071 9193600	Mon to Fri 8am to 5:30pm
Helix Practice Manager	gpsupport@clanwilliamhealth.com	01 4633098	Mon to Fri 8am to 5:30pm
Healthone	gpsupport@clanwilliamhealth.com	01 4633098	Mon to Fri 8am to 5:30pm
CompleteGP	support@completegp.ie	01 5240830	Mon to Fri 9am to 5pm
National Contracts Office	gp.agreement@hse.ie	044 9395519	Mon to Fri 9am to 5pm
PCERS Doctors Unit	pcrs.doctorsqueries@hse.ie	01 8647100	Mon to Fri 9am to 5pm
Healthlink national message broker	support@healthlink.ie	01 8287145	Mon to Fri 9am to 5pm

Fees, Contractual Arrangements & Reimbursement

Fees

Following a process of consultation involving the Department of Health, the HSE and the Irish Medical Organisation, the Minister for Health, with the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure, pursuant to Section 42 of the Public Service (Pay and Pensions) Act, 2017 has determined a schedule of fees rates be paid to GPs for the delivery of the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme. Please see: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/pcrs/circulars/gp/national-covid-19-vaccination-programme-gp-s-circular-nco-02-2021.pdf> for agreed schedule of fees.

Contractual Arrangements

Where a GP does not have a current contractual relationship with the HSE, participation in the vaccination programme will be on the same terms as for those with a contractual relationship. Such GPs will be required to formally register their intention to participate in the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme with the HSE's National Contracts Office similar to the arrangement that was put in place for the 2020/21 Influenza Vaccination Campaign. On receipt of the Doctor's completed and



signed Registration (including Garda Clearance, where applicable) the National Contract's Office will notify NIO for NCCS registration purposes and PCERS for reimbursement set up purposes.

Reimbursement

The **Primary Care Eligibility & Reimbursement Service (PCERS)** will receive, process and integrate electronic COVID-19 vaccination payment claims to ensure that GPs are paid promptly for services provided with minimal administration overhead, and return electronic acknowledgements. Payments will be based on the electronic claims which are submitted by GPs from their Practice Management Systems. Every effort will be made to ensure that there will be no need for manual claims to be submitted. Payment claims will be validated, loaded, reimbursed and included on the GP's monthly statement.

Each patient will be asked to bring their PPSN (if they have one) when attending for vaccination, so that a valid PPSN can be submitted with each electronic claim to facilitate automated payment by the PCERS. Claims for the small number of people that do not have a PPSN will be processed by PCERS using an exceptional reimbursement process.

Please note that the monthly file of Medical Card and GP Visit Card patients provided by the PCERS to GPs includes the PPSN for each patient. The GP practice systems will be updated to auto-populate the PPSN when the patient presents.

Timeline

The timeframe for roll out is dependent on vaccine supplies. Vaccination of over 85s will commence the week of the 15th of February in a slow, safe and effective way.

The indicative timeframe for vaccination of people age 70 and older is from mid-February through to May. It is expected that all of this age cohort will have been vaccinated (both doses) by the end of May. The forecasts for timing of vaccination administration doses are based on the best available known information regarding vaccine supply and delivery.

The process will commence with the people aged 85 years and older and then work sequentially through the other age groups 80-84, 75-79 and 70-74.

	Dose 1	Doses 2
Indicative Timeframe for over 70s	February - April	March - May



Appendix 1 - Quick Guide to the Provisional Vaccine Allocation Groups

This is the provisional order in which people in Ireland will be vaccinated against COVID-19.

- 1 People aged 65 years and older who are residents of long-term care facilities (likely to include all staff and residents on site)
- 2 Frontline healthcare workers
- 3 People aged 70 and older
- 4 Other healthcare workers not in direct patient contact
- 5 People aged 65-69
- 6 Key workers (Vaccination Programme)
- 7 People aged 18-64 with certain medical conditions
- 8 Residents of long-term care facilities aged 18-64
- 9 People aged 18-64 living or working in crowded settings
- 10 Key workers in essential jobs who cannot avoid a high risk of exposure
- 11 People working in education sector
- 12 People aged 55-64
- 13 Other workers in occupations important to the functioning of society
- 14 Other people aged 18-54
- 15 People aged under 18 and pregnant women

COVID-19 Vaccine Allocation Strategy available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/39038-provisional-vaccine-allocation-groups/>



Appendix 2 – Sample Checklist for COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics

Note: This is a support document for the safe practices for COVID-19 vaccination. Additional requirements may arise based on the type of vaccines, cohort of vaccinators, recipients and location of the clinics. For specific information relating to PPE and hand hygiene, please see: <https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/coronavirus/policies-procedures-guidelines/prevent-the-spread-of-coronavirus-in-the-workplace.html>

Before the Vaccine clinic		
Physical Environment / Layout of the Vaccine clinic		
YES	NO	A designated space for registration
YES	NO	Awaiting area for patients to be called for vaccination. This may be the same space as for registration
YES	NO	A designated clean area for vaccine storage and preparation in the clinic.
YES	NO	A designated area for vaccine administration
YES	NO	Area for post vaccine observation for 15 minutes (30 minutes if they have a history of allergic reactions) with adequate space for physical distancing and also a private space for medical emergencies (anaphylaxis management)
Documentation (Check for most up to date version of documents www.immunisation.ie)		
YES	NO	Clinical and administrative guidance for Vaccinators
YES	NO	National immunisation Advisory Committee Immunisation Guidelines for Ireland. https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/guidelines/covid19.pdf
YES	NO	Copy of a relevant COVID-19 vaccine medicine protocol (for nurse/midwife vaccinators only)
YES	NO	Anaphylaxis management in the community- Copy of an algorithm https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/guidelines/anaphylaxis.pdf
YES	NO	Copy of information on Cold chain management or access to the same https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/vaccineordering/
YES	NO	Vaccination record cards and HSE advice leaflets for after vaccination for the recipients (if hard copies are available)
YES	NO	Current up to date copies of : HSE vaccine information leaflets and European Medicines Agency Patient Information Leaflets (please see www.ema.eu/en for most up to date version)
Infection Prevention & Control Precautions:		
YES	NO	Posters in relation to COVID-19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Do NOT visit if you have symptoms of COVID-19 o Physical distancing o Cough etiquette/respiratory hygiene Posters are available from the HSE website
YES	NO	Hand Sanitiser (alcohol gel/foam sanitiser) for staff and patients



YES	NO	PPE for the vaccinator i.e. adequate stocks of surgical face masks
YES	NO	Disposable tissues available for patients and a foot pedal bin for disposal
YES	NO	Disinfectant wipes for worktops and other areas

YES	NO	Signs and floor markers to instruct patients to remain 2 metres apart from other patients and clinic staff have been set up before the clinic.
YES	NO	Appropriate seating arrangements with physical distancing markings displayed
YES	NO	Sharps waste bin, Clinical & Non clinical risk waste bins
Clinical equipment		
YES	NO	Access to pharmaceutical fridge with external display of current temperature and data logger
YES	NO	An anaphylaxis medical kit as per Guidelines (https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/guidelines/anaphylaxis.pdf)
YES	NO	Gloves <input type="checkbox"/> Sharps boxes <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol Gel <input type="checkbox"/> Clinical Tray <input type="checkbox"/> Cotton wool <input type="checkbox"/> Tape <input type="checkbox"/> Clinical waste bags <input type="checkbox"/> 70% Alcohol swabs <input type="checkbox"/> needles <input type="checkbox"/> syringes
After the vaccination		
YES	NO	Post-vaccination monitoring (recommended for 15 minutes or 30 minutes if patient has a history of allergic reactions): Allocation of staff for post vaccine observation for 15 -30 minutes
YES	NO	Post vaccine documentation Vaccinations administered recorded in HSE COVID-19 Vaccination Management System
YES	NO	All patient medical information placed in a secured storage location for data protection.



Useful resources & links:

- 1) Immunisation Guidelines for Ireland
<https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/guidelines/>
- 2) Clinical Guidelines for COVID-19 Vaccines
<https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/covid19vaccineinfo4hps/clinicalguidance.pdf>
- 3) Anaphylaxis management
<https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/guidelines/anaphylaxis.pdf>
- 4) HSE Guidelines for maintenance of cold-chain in vaccine fridges and management of vaccine stock
<https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/vaccineordering/sopnio01.pdf>
- 5) HSE Guidelines for maintaining the vaccine cold-chain in vaccine cool box
<https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/vaccineordering/sopnio02.pdf>
- 6) Reporting adverse reactions to the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA). Details of the brand name and batch number of the vaccine must be included)
 - Online reporting at www.hpra.ie
 - Using a downloadable report form also accessible from HPRA website, which may be completed manually and submitted to the HPRA via “freepost” available from the HPRA website <https://www.hpra.ie/homepage/about-us/report-an-issue/covid-19-vaccine-adverse-reaction>.
- 7) Summary of Product Characteristics (SmPC) for the Covid -19 vaccine used in the HSE COVID-19 vaccination programme available at <https://www.ema.europa.eu/en>
- 8) In the event of a sharps injury the local procedure must be followed. This will require immediate first aid and follow-up. For further information on sharps injury please see <http://www.hpsc.ie/AZ/EMIToolkit/EMIToolkit.pdf>

Appendix 3 – Patient Consent Checklist

When a patient attends their GP practice and is offered COVID-19 vaccination, the GP practice will use the following Consent Checklist to select the appropriate consent response. The response is then recorded on the patient's record on the GP Practice Management System.

One of these options is appropriate when establishing consent

Yes, I confirm this person has given me their consent to be vaccinated to protect against COVID-19. They have read and understood the vaccine information provided, including known side effects.

OR

No, I confirm this person has informed me that they do NOT consent to be vaccinated to protect against COVID-19. They have read and understood the accompanying vaccine information, including risks of not vaccinating.

OR

I confirm that this person cannot consent and they are being vaccinated against COVID-19 for their benefit and according to their will and preference, and the above is recorded in their healthcare record and includes information about any consultation that has taken place to help determine their will and preference.