

21st Dec. 2021

Deputy Roisin Shortall,
Dáil Éireann,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2

Issued via email to: roisin.shortall@oireachtas.ie

PQ Number: 62872/21

Question: To ask the Minister for Health the steps that are being taken to ensure cancelled booster appointments are recorded in the HSE system to avoid duplication; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Shortall,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question which has been referred by the Minister for Health to the Health Service Executive for direct response.

The HSE Covid-19 vaccination programme has to date administered over 1.5 million additional doses, including booster and immunocompromised vaccines. We are factoring in the eligibility criteria set out by NIAC and this means we are operating a lot of the cohorts in parallel in order to maintain momentum.

In order to give people maximum opportunity to get a booster and to use all capacity in the programme we are using vaccination centres, GPs and pharmacies as vaccination channels. This can mean that people will occasionally get appointments from multiple sources, or indeed after already having been vaccinated. While steps have been taken to minimise this, it is inevitable this will occur but our priority is to ensure we give people maximum choices to get vaccinated.

We are trying to encourage people to take their appointment when it is offered if at all possible. If a person who has been offered an appointment but wishes to attend a walk in service at either a vaccination centre or a pharmacy, we appreciate they inform the HSE. There are three options for the public to cancel appointments as outlined below:

- Text message stating NEW (if you want to reschedule) or REJECT (if vaccinated or do not want to take up the offered booster appointment) or COVID (if Covid positive in the last six months)
- Complete an online form on (<https://www2.hse.ie/services/booster-enquiries/change-centre.html>)
- Telephone HSE live (Tel: 1800 700 700)

We have continued to improve the IT system that operates for the Vaccination Programme. As GP and pharmacies operate on a different IT system there will be a gap in notification of the vaccination which can result in multiple appointments. Once the vaccination is put on the system, any previous appointments issued from the vaccination centres will be cancelled by the HSE. The majority of the public will be dealt with in the above system but unfortunately there can always be exceptions.

Please note that all vaccination channels will be open to individuals from all cohorts. Capacity is being created across all channels to offer an optimum number of appointments to complete each group as quickly as possible.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Damien McCallion". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Damien McCallion
National Director
National Lead Test & Trace and Vaccination Programme