

BY EMAIL ONLY

**Deputy Catherine Connolly**

Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2

18<sup>th</sup> March 2021

**PQ 11617/21 - To ask the Minister for Health if his attention has been drawn to the difficulties faced by firefighters who are not trained paramedics in registering on the HSE website for their Covid-19 vaccination given that category 2a on the online form does not provide an option for firefighters who are not trained paramedics; if all firefighters including those who are not paramedics are included in category 2a of the HSE Guidelines for Sequencing and Registration Process for HCW COVID Vaccination; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Connolly,

The HSE is rolling out the vaccine programme in line with the vaccine allocation strategy. I understand that in some areas such as Dublin, many or all of the firefighters work as paramedics as well as firefighters – people who work as paramedic have been included as frontline healthcare workers and are included in allocation group 2.

The ongoing review process will continue to look at the other priority groups yet to be vaccinated, along with the competing needs of those working or living in high-risk situations, carers who deliver essential services to highly dependent individuals in the home setting, and those who are socially vulnerable/disadvantaged. The updated Government guidance can be found in the link <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/39038-provisional-vaccine-allocation-groups/>

As I am sure you are aware that the key constraint on the vaccine rollout is that there is only a limited amount of vaccine available so it is not possible to reach everyone as quickly as we would hope.

The HSE is doing everything that it can to reach everyone as quickly as possible in line with the Government's Provisional Vaccine Allocation Groups. It is important to emphasise that vaccination is only one part of our response to the prevention of COVID-19 infection. People who are vaccinated need to continue with all the public health measures that have been proven to reduce the risk of infection, i.e., limiting our social contacts, physical distancing, wearing a mask, hand hygiene, cough etiquette and avoiding non-essential travel until a sufficiently large proportion of the population are immune.

I hope this provides you with assistance.

Yours faithfully,



Sharon Hayden  
General Manager  
Office of the Chief Clinical Officer