

7<sup>th</sup> December 2021

Ms. Neasa Hourigan, T.D.,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Dublin 2

**PQ ref 57498/21**

**“To ask the Minister for Health the dates of the scheduled administration of the first dose Covid-19 vaccines to long-stay patients aged 65 years plus to long-stay patients under 65 years of age and to acute patients in St. Stephen's Hospital, Glanmire, County Cork, respectively; and the dates of the scheduled administration of the first dose Covid-19 vaccines to nursing staff of St. Stephen's Hospital.”**

Dear Deputy Hourigan,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

The National Covid-19 Vaccination Strategy was informed by the Government document on “Provisional Vaccine Allocation Groups” published on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December 2020 which outlined that residents and staff in Long Term Residential Care Facilities for Older People aged 65 years and older and all frontline Healthcare Workers would be the initial groups identified for vaccination. Consequently, in Cork Kerry Community Healthcare, staff working in residential facilities for older persons were vaccinated on site in these facilities along with the residents in the initial phase of the vaccination programme which commenced in late December 2020.

All other healthcare workers were offered sequenced appointments in centralised vaccination clinics set up specifically to vaccinate staff from late December 2020 onwards. This healthcare worker programme ran concurrently with the initial residential programme described above and its subsequent expansions.

The campus at St Stephen’s hospital is comprised of a number of units, one of which is registered under the Health Information and Quality Authority’s remit for residential units for older persons. Staff working in this facility would have been included in the initial phase of the programme outlined above. Other units on this campus are registered under the auspices of the Mental Health Commission as residential units for those with mental health needs. Residents aged over 65 in mental health units were included in an expansion of the national vaccination programme from the week of January 25<sup>th</sup> 2021: and staff working in these units

were offered vaccination on site where supply allowed only, given that the primary vaccination programme for staff through centralised clinics had also commenced at this stage.

A key principle set out in national HSE guidance on the delivery of the vaccination programme is that no doses of the vaccine should be wasted i.e. that all available doses within vials prepared for vaccination clinics should be used. The guidance also stated that centres should establish standby lists of healthcare workers who were available at short notice and randomly selected from the lists for vaccination where the alternative was that vaccine doses expired. It is important to note that at this early stage in the vaccination programme, the Covax IT system which is used to manage the vaccination programme, did not have the functionality to schedule appointments. Therefore, in accordance with the guidance, during the initial stages of the Covid Vaccination Programme in Residential Care Facilities for Older Persons, end of day staff vaccination hubs were set up at some locations including St Stephen's at short notice. This was to ensure that every vaccine supplied to Cork Kerry Community Healthcare was used within what was then a very short shelf-life. The primary location for healthcare worker vaccinations remained in the centralized clinics, augmented by the aforementioned hubs set up to fully utilize the supply of vaccine to each location on a given day.

In response to your query, and in the context of the evolving vaccination programme as outlined in early 2020: the dates on which residents were vaccinated depended on the cohort into which they fell for the purposes of vaccination scheduling i.e. whether they were resident in a mental health registered facility or an older person's registered facility. Similarly, the dates on which staff were vaccinated depended on which of the staff vaccination streams that they accessed their vaccination.

Vaccination records for residents of our services and healthcare workers are recorded and retained on the Covax IT system in the same way as for all members of the public, in the format of individual clinical records. The records are therefore subject to GDPR protections in regard to confidentiality of such records.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,



**Kathleen O Mahony,  
General Manager,  
Covid Unit,  
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare**