



20th Jan. 2022

Deputy Eoin Ó'Broin,
Dáil Éireann,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2

Issued via email to: evin.obroin@oireachtas.ie

PQ Number: 1769-22

Question: To ask the Minister for Health the reason prioritisation has not been given to children at high-risk in relation to the Covid-19 vaccination programme for children aged 5 to 11 years of age as in other age cohorts.

Dear Deputy Ó'Broin,

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 policy regarding the roll out of the booster doses of Covid-19 vaccine is determined by National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) and the Department of Health.

The European Medicine Agency (EMA) approval to vaccinate 5–11-year-old children was received on Thursday 25th November. On the 8th of December NIAC recommended Covid-19 vaccination for those aged 5 to 11 years:

- with underlying conditions
- living with a younger child with complex medical needs
- living with a person who is immunocompromised

NIAC also stated that a Covid-19 vaccination should be offered to all other children aged 5 to 11 years because of the:


- favourable benefit risk profile of the vaccine,
- to protect them from severe disease,
- the consequences that can follow infection e.g., multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MISC), long Covid, psychosocial and developmental impacts.

We commenced the vaccinations for very high risk children in late December through the Paediatric Hospitals. This has now expanded to vaccinations in Vaccination Centres. The registration portal for high risk children opened on 28th December on the basis of self-identification by parents. All those who registered on or before 2nd January, including those self-identified as high risk, were offered an appointment in the week commencing 3rd January.

The registration portal is now open to all children aged 5-11 years with over 106k registered as of 16th January. Over 96k appointments have been issued with over 72k dose 1 vaccinations administered to date. All are encouraged to register for their vaccination with appointments issued within 72 hours from registration.

I trust the above information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Damien McCallion". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

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