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To ask the Minister for Health the way in which recommendations from the NIAC on immunisations are interpreted by his Department; the role the Immunisation Policy Team have in both implementing them and ensuring we are procuring the right vaccines where possible; and if he will make a statement on the matter - Colm Burke

Dear Deputy Burke,

I refer to the above representation (rep) which you submitted to the Health Service Executive for direct response following a partial response from the Immunisation and Infectious Disease Policy Unit within the Department of Health on 27th November 2022.

In Ireland, the National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) makes recommendations to the Department of Health about immunisation programmes. If the Department of Health and Minister for Health accept NIAC recommendations they provide funding to the HSE and instruct that an immunisation programme be implemented.

On behalf of the HSE, the National Immunisation Office (NIO) is responsible for vaccine procurement, storage and distribution, the development of standards and training for healthcare professionals (HCPs) and communication materials for the public for all National Immunisation Programmes in line with Department of Health Immunisation Policy.

There are several cross-functional teams within the NIO who work together to fulfill the above roles.

Under my leadership, the pharmacy team manages the vaccine budget. Working with HSE procurement the NIO determines the technical aspects of vaccine procurement exercises.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Lucy Jessop
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