



Oifig an Stiúrthóra Náisiúnta
Géaroibríochtaí

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Deputy Jim O'Callaghan TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

23.09.22

Re: PQ 43445 / 43446

To ask the Minister for Health the steps that he is taking to address the shortfall in the availability of the monkeypox vaccine; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Jim O'Callaghan

To ask the Minister for Health the steps that he proposes to take to provide reassurance to the public in relation to the shortage of the monkeypox vaccine; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Jim O'Callaghan

Dear Deputy O'Callaghan,

The HSE is working to expand the monkeypox vaccination programme. While vaccine supplies in Ireland are limited, the recent approval by the European Medicines Agency of interdermal administration of the vaccine, will allow the HSE to offer the vaccine to more people than initially anticipated, within the current limited supplies.

The HSE estimates that around 6,000 people may be at heightened risk of monkeypox infection in Ireland. The first phase of the vaccine programme, which is underway, is offering the vaccine to around 600 people. This proposed second phase, using the new method of administration is expected to allow for vaccination of 40-50% of the estimated number in need.

The HSE is finalising a range of operational issues in advance of the commencement of the second phase of the vaccine rollout.

Currently, the number of new monkeypox cases in Ireland, week on week, is stable.

The first phase of the vaccine roll out commenced in September and is active and ongoing. Vaccines are being offered to close contacts of monkeypox cases and people who have had early infectious syphilis (EIS) between December 2021 and July 2022. This group were identified as including some of those at the highest risk, apart from close contacts of a confirmed case.

The HSE sought the advice and guidance of clinical and ethical experts to develop a plan for the initial offer of the limited supply of vaccines currently available. The HSE has also engaged closely with advocacy and support groups to seek their input.

At this time, supplies of vaccine in Ireland and in the EU are low and limited. Ireland, along with other EU countries is actively exploring options to increase our medium to long-term supply of vaccines. Separately, the HSE will ensure that it maintains a supply of vaccine which will be available for those intermediate and high-risk contacts of a confirmed case.



Based on current indications in relation to global supplies of vaccines, Ireland is likely to have increased vaccine supplies later this year and into next year.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ciaran Browne'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Ciaran Browne
Acute Operations – HSE
National Crisis Management Team Lead (MonkeyPox)