

27th September 2022

Deputy Neasa Hourigan,
Dáil Éireann,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2

Issued via email to: neasa.hourigan@oireachtas.ie

PQ Number: 45678/22

Question: To ask the Minister for Health the management personnel in the HSE who had responsibility for the scheduling of first-dose Covid-19 vaccines to executive HSE managers; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Hourigan,

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 HSE has successfully implemented the Covid-19 Vaccination Programme in line with original government direction and the many required changes throughout the past two years. The Covid-19 Vaccination Programme has seen over 11 million Covid-19 vaccinations administered encompassing primary doses, additional doses, first and second boosters.

In December 2020, the government published a COVID-19 Vaccination Strategy and Implementation Plan. This document provided the provisional sequencing in which group were to be vaccinated.

In March 2021, the government approved an update to the COVID-19 Vaccination Allocation Strategy. Based on clinical, scientific and ethical frameworks produced by the National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) and the Department of Health, this update set out the groups to be prioritised for vaccination to best achieve the Vaccination Programme's objectives of preventing serious illness, hospitalisation and death.

The plan, which was communicated clearly to all areas and within the public domain, consisted of the following Groups to be vaccinated in sequence:

- **Group 1.** People aged 65 years and older who are residents of long-term care facilities (likely to include all staff and residents on site)
- **Group 2.** Frontline healthcare workers
- **Group 3.** People aged 70 and older
- **Group 4.** People aged 16-69 with a medical condition that puts them at very high risk of severe disease and death
- **Group 5.** People aged 65-69 whose underlying condition puts them at a high risk of severe disease and death
- **Group 6.** Other people aged 65-69 Key workers essential to the vaccine programme



- **Group 7.** People aged 16-64 who have an underlying condition that puts them at high risk of severe disease and death.
- **Group 8.** Residents of long-term care facilities aged 16-64.
- **Group 9.** People aged 64 years and younger in the following order:
 - 64-55 years
 - 54-45 years
 - 44-35 years
 - 34-25 years
 - 24-16 years

There was no separate process for administration of the Covid-19 vaccine to HSE managers. HSE managers were eligible for their vaccination when the cohort relevant to their circumstance arose. The date on which public servants were offered access to a Covid-19 vaccine was dependant on their alignment to the sequencing guidelines rather than their employment as a public servant, given the broad spectrum of those employed within the public service these dates would vary.

HSE vaccination clinics were directed to follow the scheduling in the Government Strategy. Additional guidance was put in place by the Chief Clinical Officer in scheduling appropriate staff taking into account their risk of exposure to Covid 19 in their work setting rather than their grade. The operationalisation of the sequencing guidance was implemented in each area by the vaccination centre leads under the guidance of the relevant Chief Officer or Hospital Group CEO. This documentation can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/covid-19-vaccine-materials/sequencing-of-covid-19-vaccination-of-frontline-healthcare-workers.pdf>

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Eileen Whelan'.

Eileen Whelan
National Lead Test & Trace and Vaccination Programme