



An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Scagthástála
National Screening Service

12 June 2025

Deputy Barry Heneghan
barry.heneghan@oireachtas.ie

Our Ref: ÁC/Communications

PQ 30004/25: To ask the Minister for Health the timeline for the commencement of the proposed pilot programme to improve HPV vaccine uptake rates among underserved communities; to outline the proposed methodology and geographic locations for this pilot scheme; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question.

Ireland's Cervical Cancer Elimination Action Plan

In November 2024, the HSE published Ireland's [Cervical Cancer Elimination Action Plan](#). Ireland has set a target of 2040 as the date when we will eliminate cervical cancer, meaning fewer than 4 cases per 10,000 women.

The action plan is being delivered through a partnership involving the Department of Health, the HSE, advocacy groups and patient groups. We are working to ensure that we achieve elimination for all sectors of our society. This means threading work to achieve equity through all our projects and promoting a 'whole-of-society' approach.

Pilot project to identify and understand barriers to HPV vaccination in underserved populations

The National Immunisation Office (NIO) and the National Screening Service (NSS) are partnering on a pilot project to identify and understand barriers to HPV vaccination in underserved populations. The aim of the project is to utilise existing community networks to undertake community engagement with underserved communities including Traveller, Roma and migrant groups.

The project aims to identify and understand barriers to HPV vaccination and to work with underserved communities to co-design HPV vaccination information materials for them. The HPV vaccine will be offered in the community setting to eligible people, and the findings from this work will further inform the schools HPV vaccination programme.

The project is being funded by the Women's Health Taskforce and is being delivered in the Cork and Kerry region (HSE Southwest). We began engaging with partners in these regions in April 2025.

Methodology will include:

- Consultation with underserved communities
- Engagement with project partners and service delivery teams to understand the existing HPV vaccine programme (and resources) and the potential to complement it
- Co-design of additional resources tailored to needs identified
- External evaluation of the project.

This project builds on learnings and successes of the [NSS Community Champions Project](#). Community champions are community health workers who are trusted, respected and influential within their communities. They are typically advocates, or individuals who have

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strong ties to a specific group or population. Their role is to bridge the gap between healthcare providers and people in their community, fostering trust and encouraging participation in health initiatives, including screening programmes.

I trust this information is of assistance to you, but should you have any further queries please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Alan Smith
Consultant in Public Health Medicine

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