

Operational Guidance for MMR catch-up Vaccination in General Practice

V1

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1. Background

There has been a recent rise in measles cases in the UK and Europe. MMR uptake has been suboptimal in Ireland for some time—less than 90% in routine cohorts and up to 18% assessed as non-immune to measles in young adults. The risk of measles in Ireland is now classified as very high. Given the susceptibility of Ireland to measles, an extended MMR catch-up programme is now required in the context of suboptimal measles vaccination coverage.

The HSE is now implementing an extended MMR catch-up programme to offer MMR vaccine to unvaccinated or under-vaccinated individuals in prioritised groups.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide GPs and practice staff with the relevant process and logistical arrangements to support the operational delivery of a high quality, standardised approach to the MMR catch-up programme within General Practice.

The MMR Catch up Programme is supported by the HSE Vaccinations Primary Care Contractors (VPCC) team, who coordinate the service and provide Relationship Management Support to GPs.

3. Scope

The proposed immunisation campaign will offer MMR vaccine to unvaccinated or under-vaccinated individuals in prioritised groups.

The priority groups of the programme are:

- Children
- Young people up to age 24 years
- Health and care workers
- Underserved populations such as Travellers, Roma, people who are homeless, Refugees and Applicants Seeking Protection and other vulnerable migrants, and those in custodial settings

GPs will undertake a proactive catch-up campaign for those aged up to under 18 years old. This will involve participating GP practices actively engaging with the relevant cohort in their client base including running catch-up clinics if required.

Pre-school children may be offered a first dose of MMR vaccine if they have missed it at age 12 months. The second dose of MMR will be administered to Junior Infants as normal through HSE School Immunisation Teams, and by GPs in Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal. There is no recommendation to administer either the first or second MMR dose ahead of schedule.

Children in Senior Infants and older, up to and including those aged 17 years, who are not up to date with their MMR vaccines should be offered catch-up vaccination of one or both doses as required. While the prioritisation for GPs participating in this plan is for those aged under 18 years old, GPs may also continue to provide opportunistic vaccination of those aged 18 years and over. Opportunistic vaccination can be made available through participating GPs for those unvaccinated

aged 18-24, 25-46 years or other groups, such as health and care workers who present for vaccination.

For those born in Ireland before 1978, where there is uncertainty about measles status, NIAC advise that MMR should be offered on request, particularly for individuals considered to be at high risk of exposure, for example health and care workers and those living in congregate settings or members of underserved communities with lower vaccine uptake. Those living with infants under one year of age, those living with non-immune pregnant women and those living with severely immunocompromised people should also be offered vaccination.

MMR vaccines will be made available to other priority groups such as young adults and those in 3rd level education, health and care workers, and communities with lower vaccination uptake, through community-based HSE Immunisation Teams.

GPs may commence the proactive catch-up campaign from 6th March onwards; the programme is expected to continue until June 2024.

4. Clinical Guidance

GPs and practice staff should refer to <https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/infomaterials/gpsupportingdocpci.pdf> which provides guidance for best practice for vaccinations carried out in general practice on behalf of the HSE.

For the most up to date clinical guidance and information on the administration of MMR Catch-up vaccines please see:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/mmrcatchup24/mmrcuinfohps.html>

and refer to [NIAC guidelines](#)

The following materials are available on the website for downloading and printing, or can be ordered www.healthpromotion.ie:

- Consent Form and Post-vaccination advice is available [here](#)
- Immunisation Passport is available [here](#)

5. Communications

HSE.ie has comprehensive information available on [MMR Catchup](#).

6. Vaccines & Ordering

Vaccines for the MMR catch-up programme can be ordered from the National Cold Chain Service. Deliveries will continue fortnightly and GP practices should check their individual online calendar for order cut-off and delivery dates.

There are no restrictions on the quantity of MMR vaccines which can be ordered by GP practices. If the quantity available to order through the online portal is not sufficient, additional MMR vaccines can be requested by email to vaccines@udd.ie where the request will be processed. Deliveries are fortnightly so additional orders should be placed for delivery on the next scheduled delivery date.

For any queries relating to vaccine orders or deliveries, please contact NCCS customer services at: vaccines@udd.ie or 01 4637770.

7. Record Keeping

All MMR vaccines should be recorded in the GP practice records according to normal practice as the clinical record.

8. Reporting

All immunisations administered to children up to their second birthday under the PCIP, **including MMR**, should continue to be returned by the normal process to the Local Immunisation Office for reimbursement, to ensure that all relevant bonus payments are still applied.

Payment for vaccines administered to those aged 2 and older under the MMR catch-up campaign from 6th March 2024 onwards will be processed through a central team. **Participating GPs should send returns for those aged 2 and older on a weekly basis via Healthmail to MMRcatchup@healthmail.ie.** The required dataset is outlined in the table below. GPs may use the template form which has been circulated by email, or an extract or report containing the equivalent information from GP Practice Management Systems will also be accepted as a Healthmail attachment. Claims relating to children under the age of 2 will not be processed through this pathway, but should be managed via normal process to the Local Immunisation Office.

Table 1: Required Dataset

GP Information	Patient Information	Vaccination Information
SAP ID (NCCS Number)	Name	Vaccine Name
Practice Name / address	Date of Birth	Manufacturer
GP Name	Gender	Date Vaccine Given
HSE/GMS Number	PPSN	Batch Number
	Address and Eircode	Expiry Date
	Contact Number	Vaccinators Name
	Parent/Guardian Name (if patient under 18)	Site Given - left/right thigh; left /right arm
	Health & care worker (if known) Yes / No	Consent obtained
	LIO	

GPs should send returns on a weekly basis via Healthmail to MMRCatchUp@healthmail.ie using the templates provided, which can be downloaded from [MMR catch-up templates](#) or by taking an extract or report from the practice Management System with the equivalent information.

9. Data Quality

Data quality errors or inconsistencies that are identified on GP returns will be followed up by the Relationship management team for clarification or correction, in order to proceed to payment.

10. Support contact details

Table 2: Contact Information MMR catch-up

Query	Telephone	Email
MMR forms for payment	081 8008811	MMRCatchUp@healthmail.ie
Clinical Queries - National Immunisation Office		immunisation@hse.ie
Vaccine ordering & deliveries NCCS	01 463 7770	vaccines@udd.ie
National Contracts Office	044 9395519	natcontractsoffice@hse.ie
Healthmail Issues	061 203779	ictsupport@three.ie