Guidance in the form of approach and script
To support the awareness raising strategy re Covid-19 vaccines

For Intercultural & LGBT+ Health funded projects in SECH
Dated 11.02.21

Please read this document in conjunction with the Awareness Raising Strategy

	APPROACH	WHAT TO SAY
1	**Engage with service user in an empathetic way**	"*I'm calling today to let you know that a Covid vaccine will be offered to all people in Ireland*". Consider asking for permission to discuss vaccines: *"May I talk with you about the Covid1-9 vaccines?"* *"Have you seen the videos we've posted on social media?"* *"Have you thought about vaccination against Covid-19?"* Emphasise autonomy*: "This is completely your decision to make and this will be respected"* Give the agreed Core Key Messages: See appendix 1 for key messages accurate as of 11.02.21. Check the HSE website regularly for up to date information. **Use replies to assess where the service user is on the Vaccine Acceptance Continuum**
2	**Assess where the service user is at in relation to vaccine up take and let this inform how you will respond to each service user.** **See table in Appendix 2 at end of document.**	Categories: ▪ Refuse all vaccines with conviction ▪ Refuse but unsure ▪ Accept / refuse some / delay vaccination ▪ Accept with doubt and concerns ▪ Accept all with confidence Those who are vaccine hesitant are in the middle

APPROACH FOR SERVICE USERS WHO ARE HESTIANT OR ACCEPTING OF VACCINATION:

	APPROACH	**WHAT TO SAY**
1	**If the service user replies that they are considering vaccination / plan to be vaccinated engage them in conversation:**	*"That's good because the HSE, Department of Health and the World Health Organization recommends people get the Covid-19 vaccine when it is offered to them"*
2	**Ask open ended questions**:	*"Is there anything that you'd like to ask about getting the vaccine'"* *"Can I ask you what you are worried about?"*
3	**Affirm strengths**	*"It is good that you are looking for information about the vaccine"* *"I'm glad to hear that you have been taking steps to protect yourself and others from getting Covid-19"* *"It's great that you have taken other steps to stay healthy during this pandemic"*
4	**Acknowledge & validate concerns**	*"It can be worrying when you read things like that on-line or hear about those things"* *"I understand that you want to make the best choice but that you are having concerns about XYZ"*
5	**Reflect and respond: Acknowledge the fears & concerns** of the service user by saying back to them what they said.	*"I understand that you are feeling worried/anxious/unsure … because you are concerned about the safety of the vaccine / or the side effects or XYZ"*
6	**Address specific concerns:** a) Answer questions and give clear information where that is possible b) Find out the answers to questions preferably while with the service user c) Assist service users to find answers to their questions on the HSE website via this link: COVID-19 vaccine	*"Can I tell you some things about the safety of the vaccine / or the side effects?"* READ the key messages on vaccine SAFETY

7	**If you cannot find answers to questions**, send questions to Suzanne or Angela (Social Inclusion Staff) who will follow up with a healthcare professional and revert to you.	*"I can't find the answer to your question just now but I will ring you back with the answer as soon as I can. Is that alright?"*
8	**Stress the positives**: **Do not bring up concerns that might reinforce myths.**	Vaccination protects people against serious disease
9	**Ensure service users have the information they need to make an informed choice**	Give the agreed key messages as appropriate. See appendix 1 for key messages accurate as of 11.02.21. Check the HSE website regularly for up to date information. *Are there any questions / other questions you'd like to ask? I am looking at the HSE website and can find the answers for you"*

10	**Point to reliable sources of information:**	*"I can send you the link to the HSE website by Whats App if you'd like?"* (if service user is literate)
		
		"There are a number of reliable websites in Ireland that you can trust, these are the
		
		    - *HSE (Health Service Executive),*
		    - *Gov.ie*
		
		I can help translate this information for you. Would that be helpful?"

11	**Address misinformation in partnership** with the service user rather than correcting the service user. Allow the service user to correct their own misinformation with the information that you provide' **Misinformation** is incorrect or misleading information but it's not created with the intention of hurting others.	*"I'm sure you know that there is a lot of Information circulating that is not true, especially on social media in all countries. It is very important to get information from trusted sources. Please let me know if I can ever help you find the information you need".*

3

	Disinformation is deliberate misinformation and it is designed to deceive or mislead. **How to give information**: It's important not to overwhelm service users; too much information can put people under pressure. Avoid putting people on-the-spot to make a decision. Give service users time and space to digest information.	
12	**Offer re-assurance** **Communicate why the vaccine is safe.**	*'It's important to know that the Covid-19 vaccines have to meet the exact same standard and data requirements as all vaccines and that the Health Products Regulatory Authority monitors all medicines in Ireland'.*
	Explain how it was possible to develop vaccines so quickly	*'The Covid-19 vaccines have gone through all the usual steps needed to develop a safe and effective vaccine. But the work to develop them has moved much faster than usual. This is because they have gone through all their development phases at the same time, not one* after the other. *This was done to make them available as soon as possible.* '*Is it alright if I ring you back in a few days after you've had time to think some more?'*
13	**Leave the door open for service users to come back for further information**	*"You can contact me (state when) if you have any other questions or if there's anything else I can help with"*
14	**Follow up:** It is important to follow up after health information is given; phone the service user back as agreed.	*"'I'm just calling to see if you have any further questions or queries that I could help with?'*

APPROACH FOR SERVICE USERS WHO REFUSE VACCINATION:

1	**Take a non-judgemental approach**: acknowledge the service users feels strongly and wants to make the best decision for their health	*"I can see that you feel strongly about this and that you want to do the best for your health"*
2	**Ask for permission to discuss**: ask if it would be alright to talk about vaccinating against Covid-19.	"*Would it be alright with you to talk about vaccinating against Covid?"*
3	If the service users says **YES** then	**Follow approach as per vaccine hesitant and focus on their specific concerns** Remember to leave space for future discussions: "*You can always phone me on …*"
3	If the service users says **NO** then	**Do not enter into debate / argument; accept their position:** *"I understand that you feel strongly about this and I accept that"* *"If you change your mind you can contact me anytime"* **Ensure the relationship with the service user is maintained so the door remains open and the service user knows that they will still receive supports***: "You can still phone me about other things I can help with".*

Key points:

- As we have learned, many people do not speak / understand English even if they've lived in Ireland for a long number of years. People sometimes try to cover this up and convey that they do understand a communication, when they actually don't. As always, it's important to ensure that all information is understood.

- Also, as we know, many people are not literate even in their native language and so information needs to be communicated orally as well as being translated into different languages. Many people have both literacy and language barriers.

APPENDIX 1:

Agreed key messages for SECH Intercultural & LGBT+ Service Users

From HSE website and agreed by Public Health & Social Inclusion GP SECH

Accurate as of 11.02.21
Please check the HSE website regularly for up to date information

Core Messages:
- Getting a COVID-19 vaccine should protect you from the serious complications of COVID-19
- The vaccine is not mandatory. But the HSE, Department of Health and the World Health Organization recommends people get the COVID-19 vaccine when it is offered to them.
- The COVID-19 vaccine cannot give you COVID-19.
- The COVID-19 vaccine is free. The vaccines will not be available privately.   You do not need to apply or register; you will be informed when it's your turn to get the COVID-19 vaccine.

Your COVID-19 vaccine appointment
- You will get the vaccine as an injection in your upper arm. It will only take a few minutes. You will need a second dose of the vaccine. The Doctor or Nurse will tell you when you need to come back for the second dose.
- You will need to give your consent by either signing a form or ticking that you consent on the computer, before we give you the vaccine. Any information you give will only be processed for the specific purpose of managing your vaccination
- If you have already had COVID-19, you still need to get the vaccine. This is because you could become infected with the virus again. The Doctor or Nurse will advise you about when it's the best time for you to get the vaccine.
- Even after you get the vaccine, continue to follow public health advice on how to stop the spread of the virus. For example, social distancing, wearing a face covering and washing your hands properly and often.

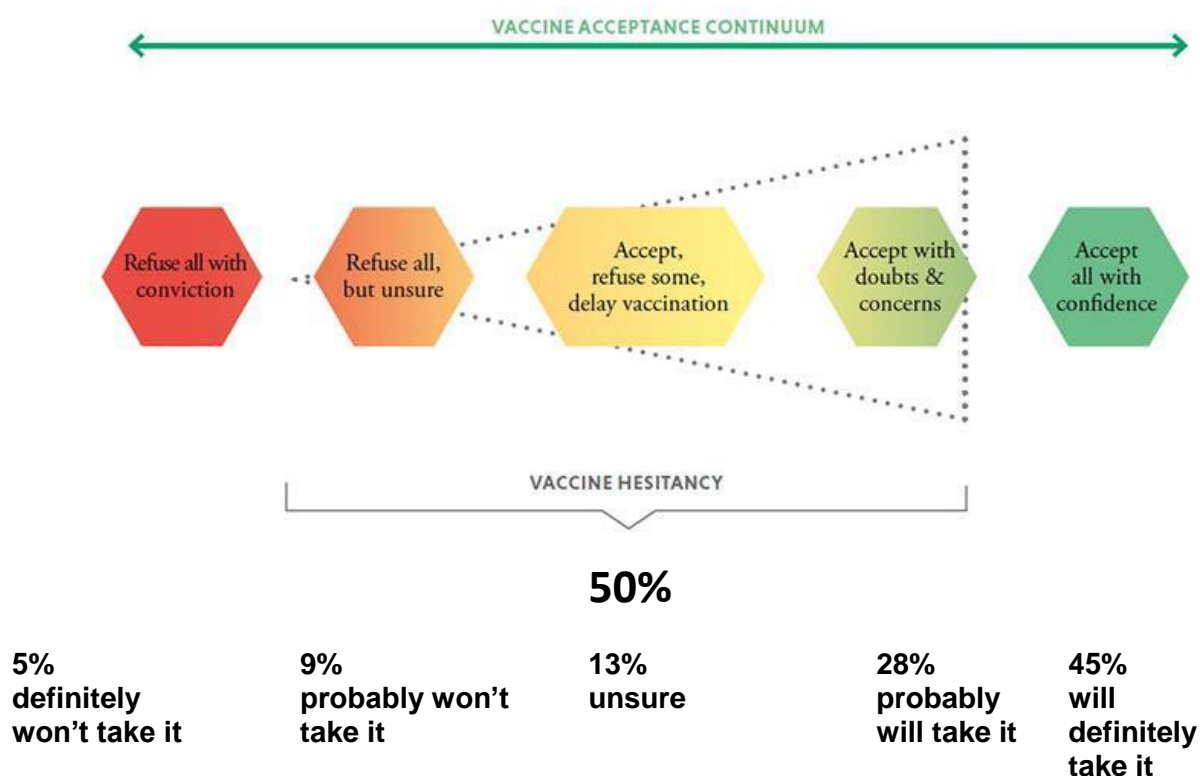**Safety of COVID-19 vaccines**
- Vaccines are tested for safety and effectiveness before they can be used. The HSE only uses a vaccine if it meets the required standards of safety and effectiveness.
- The COVID-19 vaccines have gone through all the usual steps needed to develop a safe and effective vaccine. But the work to develop them has moved much faster than usual. This is because they have gone through all their development phases at the same time, not one after the other. This was done to make them available as soon as possible.
- Like all medicines, vaccines can cause side effects. Most of these are mild to moderate and short-term. Not everyone gets side effects.

APPENDIX 2:

Vaccine Acceptance Continuum

Assess where service users are at on the line below. Let this inform how you will respond to each service user.

Those who are vaccine hesitant are in the middle categories.

| 5% definitely won't take it | 9% probably won't take it | 13% unsure | 28% probably will take it | 45% will definitely take it |

Note: the above graph is taken from the Covid Vaccine Advocate Forum presentation (16.12.20)

End.