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To: **General Practitioner**

**24 September 2021**

### **Clinical update - COVID-19 Vaccine Booster**

Dear Doctor,

This letter contains important information about the COVID-19 vaccine booster.

The National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) have advised one booster dose of an mRNA vaccine is recommended for all those aged

- 80 years and older and
- 65 years and older who are living in long term care facilities (LTCFs)

who have already completed their primary course with any COVID-19 vaccine type.

NIAC have recommended a booster dose of COVID-19 vaccine because people aged 80 years and older, and those 65 years and older living in LTCFs are especially at risk of severe COVID-19 disease.

There is no recommendation for booster doses in any other groups; therefore booster doses should not be administered to any other groups.

The booster dose should be given after an interval of six months following the last dose of an authorised COVID-19 vaccine. Serological testing prior to giving a booster dose is not recommended.

To date, the European Medicines Agency (EMA) has not authorised booster doses for any COVID-19 vaccine so such use would currently be off label, but this programme is recommended by NIAC.

The booster dose can be given at the same time as or at any interval before or after seasonal influenza vaccine (or any other vaccine including PPV23 vaccine). This will allow the uptake of both COVID and seasonal influenza vaccines to be optimised in these groups. The vaccines should be given in separate arms if possible.

The National Immunisation Office website has created a number of resources to support your team. The URL to access information is <https://bit.ly/C19Booster>

This webpage contains links to:

- The RCPI National Immunisation Advisory Committee recommendations for booster doses of COVID-19 vaccine
- COVID-19 Vaccination Consent Form for a booster dose of Pfizer/BioNTech (Comirnaty®) COVID-19 vaccine
- Leaflet for patients to support informed consent and aftercare information
- Frequently Asked Questions for vaccinator and health professionals
- Clinical Guidelines Version 24

The HSE will be organising COVID-19 vaccination for those aged 65 years and older who are living in LTCF's, so GP's do not need to order vaccine for this cohort. Influenza vaccines for those in LTCF's should be arranged as in previous years.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lucy Jessop'.

Dr Lucy Jessop  
Director of Public Health  
National Immunisation Office, MRCN 424447