



Date: 8th March 2024

Circular Number: NCO-12-2024

MMR catch-up programme

Dear Doctor,

As you will be aware, there has been a recent rise in measles cases in the UK and Europe, and MMR uptake has been suboptimal in Ireland for some time. The HSE Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) was notified of the death of a person with confirmed measles on 7th February 2024, the first confirmed case in Ireland in 2024. 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 required in the context of suboptimal measles vaccination coverage.

Under existing arrangements since November 2023 (Ref [Circular S0057-NCO-23](#)), a scheme was in place for GPs to offer routine and catch-up MMR for children aged 14 months to 10 years old inclusive who may have missed out on their MMR vaccinations.

To the current situation, HSE agreed with the IMO to extend this agreement to allow GPs to administer first and second doses to all ages on an opportunistic basis where patients present for vaccination. This arrangement was at the existing agreed fee of €36.03.

Pro-active MMR catch-up campaign

The HSE is now implementing an extended HSE MMR catch-up programme. The proposed immunisation campaign will offer MMR vaccine to un- 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



Priority for General Practice: Proactive catch-up campaign for under 18 year olds

The HSE have reached agreement with the IMO that GPs will undertake a proactive catch-up campaign for those aged 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.

For NIAC recommendations see:

https://rcpi.access.preservica.com/uncategorized/IO_ac4bf032-18ec-49ab-b78e-f92302999831/

All clinical information can be accessed at:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/mmrcatchup24/mmrcuinfohps.html> where materials specific to the MMR catch-up campaign will be available shortly.



Information resources and templates specific to the MMR catch-up campaign will be available at:
<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/gmscontracts/vaccination-primary-care-contractors-programme/>

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.

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

Fees

The following fee rates will apply under existing Regulations where a Primary Childhood Immunisation Contract (PCIP) holder administers MMR catch-up vaccinations to children aged between 14 months and 17 years (inclusive) and adults aged 18 years and over, in accordance with NIAC guidelines. The fee rates set out hereunder are in line with those set out in S.I 692 (2019).

MMR dose 1 €36.03

MMR dose 2 €36.03

In recognition of the increased administrative burden associated with the proactive catch up effort, an additional administration support payment of **€6 per dose** of MMR vaccine given will apply for children aged 2-17 years inclusive, from 6th March onwards for the duration of the proactive catch-up campaign.

This additional payment is time-bound in nature and does not erode, substitute for or replace existing legislative, circular or contractual terms pertaining to the PCIP with GPs.

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 Appendix 1. GPs may use the template form which will be circulated by email in the



coming days, 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.

Payments will be issued through PCRS with a message on the GP Payments Details to denote that it is an **MMR Catch-up Payment**.

For any queries or assistance in relation to submitting returns under the MMR catch-up programme, please contact the Relationship Management Team on 0818 008811, or email MMRcatchup@healthmail.ie.

Conclusion

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to General Practitioners and their teams for the efficient manner in which immunisation programmes have been delivered to date, and to thank you for your participation in the MMR catch-up programme. I would also like to wish you and your team every success in delivering this programme to your patients over the coming months.

Please be assured of the HSE's continued support at this time.

Yours sincerely,

Pat Healy
National Director
Clinical Programme Implementation
& Professional Development



Appendix 1 – Dataset for MMR catch-up returns / claims

GPs will receive a template form in Excel via email in the coming days. An extract or report from your PM system containing the equivalent information is also acceptable.

Returns for all MMR vaccines administered to those aged 2 and over from 6th March onwards, for the duration of the catch-up programme, should be submitted weekly via Healthmail to MMRcatchup@healthmail.ie. If you do not have a Healthmail account, please contact the Relationship Management Team on 0818 008811.

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	Dose 1 or 2
	LIO	Consent obtained