

Explainer Note on Accelerated Vaccine Rollout 2.7.21

Accelerated vaccination option for age cohorts for which mRNA vaccine is not yet offered.

Vaccination roll-out continues positively with uptake at high levels, which is essential for any vaccination programme, with the vaccination of those aged 39-35 progressing well. People continue to be able to register for all previous age cohorts and we encourage them to do so.

Registration for mRNA vaccine for 34-30 year olds:

The HSE has confirmed that the registration portal for those aged 34-30 will open on **Thursday 8th July**. Vaccination appointments for this group, using mRNA vaccine, are due to commence the following week. It will take around 3-4 weeks to complete the first doses for these people with Pfizer or Moderna, depending on supply deliveries and uptake.

Accelerated vaccination option for 18-34 year old group:

As a response to rising concerns with regard to the Delta variant, the National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) has provided further advice in the context of the threat of a further wave of Covid-19 infections.

While NIAC has stated that it is still preferable that those aged 18-49 are given mRNA vaccines, when COVID-19 rates are high or increasing and availability of alternatives are limited, the adenoviral vector vaccines (AstraZeneca and Janssen) can be recommended, to offer earlier protection.

The supply of mRNA vaccine is such that during July the plan will allow the programme to continue current planned vaccinations and to commence the vaccination of 34-30 year olds.

However, as a first dose of an mRNA vaccines may not be available for adults under the age of 34 for some weeks, and into August for those under 30, in the context of the emerging threat of the Delta variant and revised NIAC advice, this group of people aged 18 to 34 will now be offered the option of earlier vaccination with either the AstraZeneca and Janssen COVID-19 vaccines. This group should consider the likely timing of the offer of an mRNA vaccine for their age cohort:

Vaccination with mRNA vaccine – projected first dose commencement dates, depending on supply:

- 34-30 year olds: Mid July
- 29-25 year olds: Early August
- 24-18 year olds: Mid-August

Should they then consider opting into an earlier vaccination with AZ or Janssen, consent mechanisms will be in place to ensure that anyone wishing to avail of earlier access is appropriately informed of the rare side-effects associated with the adenoviral vector vaccines.

How will it work:

From next week, the vaccination programme will have a twin-track approach to the vaccination of the remaining population:

1. The registration portal for mRNA vaccine will open on 8th July for those aged 34-30. Thereafter, the mRNA vaccine programme will continue to be opened up for registration for the 29-25 year olds in early August; then 24-18 year olds in mid-August.

2. The following additional options will be open for those who will not yet be eligible to register for a mRNA vaccine in the short term:
 - a. From Monday 5th July limited supplies of Janssen vaccine will begin to be made available to pharmacies across the county, with weekly deliveries during the course of July. People between the ages of 18 and 34 will be able to register with a participating community pharmacy if they wish to opt into vaccination with Janssen. Pharmacists will distribute the vaccine on a list basis as supplies arrive. The participating pharmacies will be listed on the HSE website.
 - b. From the week commencing the 12th of July a further option will open on the HSE registration portal to allow those people aged 18-34 who choose to opt into an early vaccination to register their interest for an AstraZeneca vaccine (dose 1, with dose 2 four weeks later) or for a Janssen vaccine (1 dose regimen). Appointments will be provided based on available supply.
Note: appointments will be issued as normal by age hierarchy, i.e. older ages will be scheduled first.

Key metrics:

It is estimated that the remaining population not yet vaccinated in these groups is:

Aged 34-30: 250k

Aged 29-18: 550k

Supply of adenoviral vector vaccine:

During July, there is expected to be:

- c.200k Janssen vaccine available for administration
- c.100k AZ vaccine confirmed with further deliveries expected but volume or dates not yet confirmed. (The schedule is possibly up to 600k, but no confirmation this will arrive in July).