



DISABILITY FEDERATION OF IRELAND

Fumbally Court, Fumbally Lane, Dublin 8, D08 TXY8

Tel: 01 454 7978 Fax: 01 454 7981

Email: info@disability-federation.ie

Web: www.disability-federation.ie



Sent via email to:

stephen.donnelly@oireachtas.ie

02.04.21

Dear Minister Donnelly,

DFI has been informed by the HSE that the changes to the vaccine prioritisation list affect people with disabilities receiving Personal Assistant and home support services. They informed us that while their vaccines for day service users are secure, there likely will not be enough to vaccinate people in PA and home support services.

We have sought clarification as to whether this will mean a temporary delay to their vaccination, due to a supply issue, or whether this group of people will no longer be prioritised for the vaccine as part of Group 4. We have not yet had clarification from the HSE on this. If they have been de-prioritised, this needs to be formally addressed by your Department.

When the changes to the vaccine prioritisation list were announced this week, people in the very high risk and high-risk groups were told that they would not be affected. [An Taoiseach stated to the Dáil that the new priority list would ensure that the most vulnerable will be vaccinated first.](#)

Now, people who were due to be vaccinated as part of the 'very high risk' group may no longer be prioritised. If this is the case, the government need to explain to these individuals and their families the rationale for this sudden U-turn.

International evidence points to the link between disability and severe consequences of COVID-19 including hospitalisation and death, regardless of age. This data is not available in Ireland simply because it is not collected, despite DFI's repeated lobbying of NPHET to start collecting this data.

In recognition of the international evidence, people in disability services were told they would be prioritised for the vaccine. Now, mid-way through this process half of them may be excluded from this process, without explanation. This would erode the trust and confidence of people with disabilities and their families in the fairness of the public health system.

Disability Federation of Ireland is a company limited by guarantee not having share capital, registered in Dublin.
CRO No: 140948, CHY No: 6177, CRA No: 20010584

Directors: Fran Brennan (Chairperson), Alison McCallion (Vice-Chairperson), Gráinne O'Leary (Vice-Chairperson), Pat Clarke, Iulia Crisan, Michael Doyle, Ann Marie Ellison, Anne Griffin, Siobhan Long, Wendy McCarry, Julie Sharp



DISABILITY FEDERATION OF IRELAND

Fumbally Court, Fumbally Lane, Dublin 8, D08 TXY8

Tel: 01 454 7978 Fax: 01 454 7981

Email: info@disability-federation.ie

Web: www.disability-federation.ie



People with disabilities who receive Personal Assistant and home support services are often those with complex and chronic co-morbid health conditions. This includes many younger people. They were already more vulnerable to health difficulties before COVID-19 and have been badly impacted by the pandemic. They and their families face higher exposure to COVID-19 as they have had to continue to access essential health and social care services throughout the pandemic.

Please clarify whether this group of people have been removed from Priority Group 4, or if this is a more temporary supply issue. If this is not temporary, explain to people with disabilities and their families, who are affected by this change, the rationale for this decision.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John Dolan', is written above a horizontal line.

John Dolan
CEO
Disability Federation of Ireland