

Consent for Vaccination for Children under 16 years arriving from Ukraine

National Consent for COVID-19 Vaccination Working Group

April 2022

The following guidance has been prepared by members of the National Consent for COVID-19 Vaccination Working Group in response to requests for guidance on consent for vaccination of children under 16 years of age arriving from Ukraine and who are not accompanied by a parent/ legal guardian. This has been prepared to assist managers and vaccination staff working with HSE COVID 19 vaccination services.

All children and accompanying adults should be given vaccine related information in a format they can understand including the opportunity to ask questions so that they are informed. They should have access to an interpreter service.

If a child under 16 years is accompanied by a parent or legal guardian

If a child from the Ukraine has a parent or legal guardian in Ireland then the existing guidance related to consent for vaccination of children under 16 years applies. Information on consent to vaccination for children under 16 years is available here:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/covid19vaccineinfo4hps/>.

If a child under 16 years is accompanied by an adult other than their parent/ legal guardian

If a child under 16 years is accompanied by an adult other than their parent/ legal guardian, such as a non-parent relative or family friend, and is requesting that the child receive COVID 19 vaccination, the consent process should include the following steps:

1. Try to **contact a parent/ legal guardian or next of kin** to obtain their consent e.g., phone call. Confirmation of parental consent over the phone or received electronically is acceptable (reference: *01032022 Approach for obtaining parental consent over the phone - Version 01*).

The vaccination record should be updated to include the details of:

- the communication process and decision of parental consent OR
 - the unsuccessful attempt to contact the parent.
2. If it was not possible to communicate with a parent, the healthcare worker should then:
 - Consider whether vaccination is in **the best interests of the child**

- Confirm that the **child is assenting**
- Confirm with the accompanying adult that there is **no reason to believe that the parent/legal guardian would not consent.**
- Update the vaccination record to include the details for each of the above.

If there are concerns that either a child is not assenting, or concerns regarding the accompanying adult's understanding of the will and preference with respect of vaccination, the vaccination process should be paused. If there are any safeguarding concerns for the child or young person, then a referral should be made to TUSLA.

Record keeping approach

The vaccinator should ensure they keep clear records on file to outline the communications and decision-making related to the vaccination of the child.

A **Service Cloud Ticket** associated to the individual child or young person's record should be opened in all cases where a child is not accompanied in person by their parent or legal guardian to detail the circumstance of the case. This information should include the following:

- Details of the full name of the accompanying adult and details of relationship between the child/young person and the accompanying adult
- Details on why the parent/legal guardian is not present (e.g. *Child/Young person has migrated to Ireland from Ukraine and is accompanied by their aunt*)
- Assessment that vaccination was made in best interests of the child
- Confirmation that accompanying adult knows of no reason why the parent/legal guardian would not consent
- Verification that the child assents to vaccination
- If applicable. details of the attempt made to contact via phone the parent/legal guardian including date and time of call, and who made the call (name and role of person making the call and the name and role of the person who witnessed the call)

The Service Cloud Case should be marked and closed and this remains in the system as a full record of the process followed.

In the **Covax Immunisation Consent** fields the following should be noted when it has not been possible to establish contact with the parent/legal guardian of the child/young person:

Name of Consenting Person: Unaccompanied Child – Case XXX (*where XXX is the Service Cloud Case Number*)

Relationship Type: Leave Blank