

# Section 6 – Specific Service Theme on Immunisation

## What is the target?

Vaccine uptakes need to be above **95%** to prevent outbreaks of childhood vaccine preventable diseases (World Health Organisation)

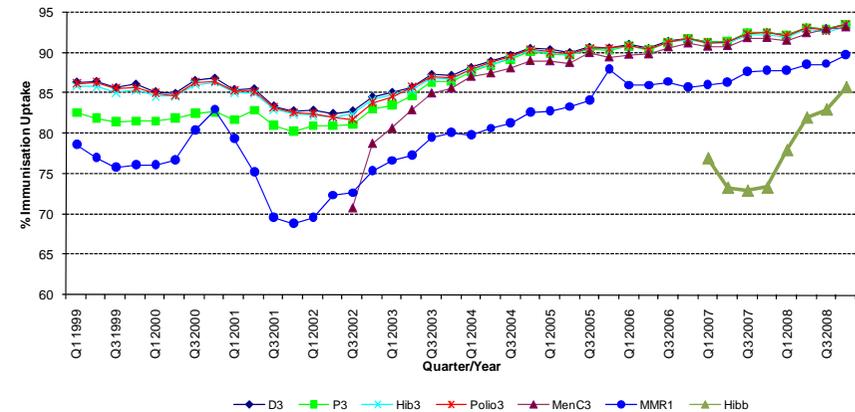
National immunisation uptake rates for children at 24 months of age in Quarter 4 -2008 reached **94%** for third dose of diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (DTP), **93%** for third dose of Haemophilus influenzae b (Hib) and polio and **90%** for first dose of measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccines. These uptake rates have improved significantly since 2005 when the equivalent rates for DTP and MMR were 90% and 83%.

These uptake rates have been achieved through a partnership approach between the HSE and those general practitioners involved in programme delivery.

D3 = Third dose diphtheria vaccine  
 Hib 3= Third dose Hib vaccine  
 Men C = Third dose meningococcal C Vaccine  
 Hib b = Fourth dose Hib vaccine

P3 = Third dose pertussis vaccine  
 Polio 3 = Third dose polio vaccine  
 MMR 1= First dose MMR vaccine

## National quarterly immunisation uptake rates at 24 months



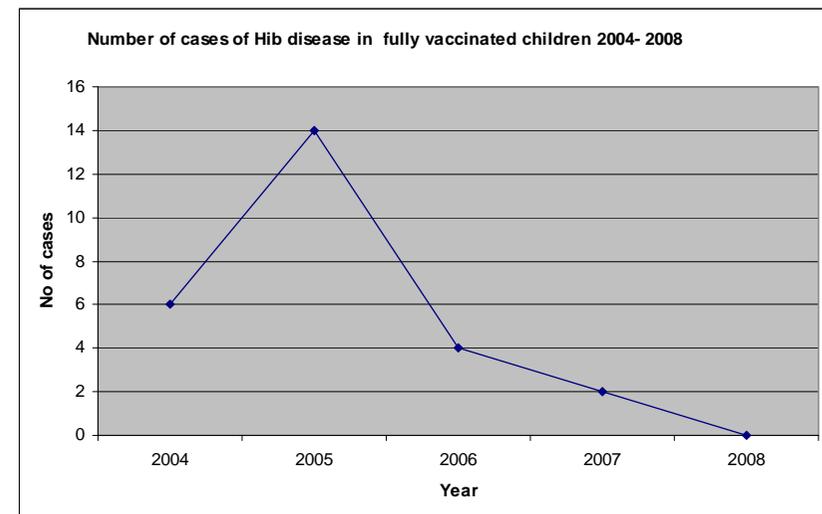
Source- Health Protection Surveillance Centre

## The National Immunisation Office (NIO) was established in 2006 with responsibility for

- Overseeing the day-to-day implementation of the National Immunisation Programme
- Managing vaccine procurement and distribution
- The organisation of campaigns to boost vaccine uptake
- Development of standardised information leaflets for parents and healthcare professionals
- Development and delivery of immunisation training for all involved in immunisation
- Maintaining the National Immunisation website [www.immunisation.ie](http://www.immunisation.ie)
- Streamlining current IT systems with a view to the establishment of a National Immunisation Registry

## Haemophilus Influenzae type B (Hib) booster

- Incidence of Hib disease fell following introduction of Hib vaccine into the routine childhood schedule in 1992.
- In 2004 and 2005 an increase in Hib disease reported in fully vaccinated children.
- A catch-up booster vaccination of all children aged 12-47 months (220,000 cohort) recommended which was implemented in November 2006,
- A routine Hib booster vaccine at 12 months was added to the childhood schedule
- Significant reduction in cases of Hib disease in fully vaccinated children since catch up campaign and booster introduction



Source: Health Protection Surveillance Centre

**Vaccine procurement and distribution**

Since 2005

- All vaccines for publicly funded immunisation programmes are procured nationally through an e-tendering process.
- The HSE National Cold Chain Delivery Service has been available nationally.
- Vaccines are delivered from a central site to GPs, hospitals and health centres under documented temperature controlled conditions.
- HSE National Cold Chain Delivery Service Customer study in 2008 showed high (>90%) satisfaction.
- Proven value for money through prudent vaccine procurement and delivery.
- Total childhood vaccine expenditure decreased from €14 million to €10.3 million between 2004 and 2007.
- Annual influenza vaccine tender for 2009 secured at a cost saving of €1 million.

**New Childhood immunisation schedule 2008**

In September 2008 following the recommendations of the National Immunisation Advisory Committee changes to the primary childhood immunisation schedule took place

- The addition of pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) at 2, 6 and 12 months
- The addition of Hepatitis B vaccine (as part of a 6 in 1 vaccine) at 2, 4 and 6 months
- The change in the age for administration of Haemophilus influenzae type B (Hib) booster vaccine from 12 to 13 months

The change of the age for administration of Meningococcal C vaccine from 2, 4 and 6 months to 4, 6 and 13 months

**Implications**

- 5<sup>th</sup> visit to GP
- 3 vaccines at 6 month visit
- Two childhood schedules in operation for up to 12 months
- PCV catch up campaign run concurrently

**Implementation**

- Coordinated by the NIO in collaboration with the National Immunisation Implementation Group comprising representatives from public health and PCCC.
- Methods were standardised to ensure that nationally all parents received the same information materials and return forms to the local health officer were also standardised

**Media campaign**

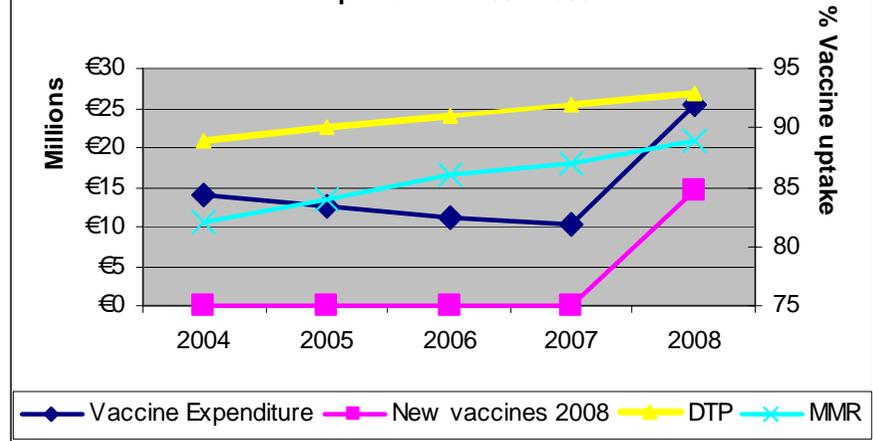
- National and local radio and print (September 2008).

**Information materials**

A variety of information materials for both healthcare professionals and parents were developed. These included

- Information pack for healthcare professionals including frequently asked questions
- Standardised information leaflets produced nationally for the first time providing information a clear consistent fashion about the vaccines, the diseases that they prevent, common side effects of vaccination and how to deal with them.

**Annual childhood vaccine expenditure and vaccine uptake 2004-2008**



- A parent information guide “Your Child’s Immunisations”
- An Immunisation Record book for parents

Other support materials included the provision of the vaccination schedule on fridge magnets, pens, towels for parents of newborn babies and pocket calendars. Materials for parents were literacy proofed by the National Adult Literacy Agency.

**Training**

The NIO in collaboration with the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) developed a “Practical Guide to Immunisation”.

- Addressed aspects of immunisation including as vaccine preventable diseases, how vaccines work, vaccine administration and communicating with parents.
- Training CD with PowerPoint presentations of each of the chapters providing a comprehensive standard training programme.
- National “Train the Trainers Day” held in February 2008.
- Trainers cascaded this programme at regional and local level.
- To date 4,500 healthcare professionals have availed of immunisation training.

**NIO website [www.immunisation.ie](http://www.immunisation.ie)**

- Accredited by the World Health Organisation
- Updated to reflect new programme
- Leaflets available for download in 10 different languages
- Leaflets literacy proofed
- Website activity doubled in September 2008 with more than 10,000 “hits”
- 86% of visitors to website from Ireland – remainder from United Kingdom (8%), United States (5%) and other countries (3%)

**Pneumococcal vaccine catch-up campaign**

- Implemented at same time as the new childhood schedule
- For all children under 2 years of age (121,000 cohort)
- Coordinated centrally by the NIO
- National and local radio and print campaign calling specific cohorts of children
- National vaccine returns form sent to NIO for vaccine uptake
- Contact with childcare facilities
- Centralised returns process
- Focus of European Immunisation Week 2009
- Campaign to end October 2009

**European Immunisation Week**

European Immunisation Week (EIW) is a World Health Organisation initiative

- Aim is to increase vaccine coverage through enhanced awareness of the importance of immunisation
- Increased advocacy and communication within the European region.
- Ireland has been an active participant in EIW since 2005.
- Activities to date include National Conferences, national and local media campaigns promotional stands, art competitions, educational programmes for mother and toddler groups
- EIW ran from April 20<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> 2009 and the focus in Ireland was to promote the pneumococcal vaccine catch-up campaign through a media campaign.

**MMR Campaign in Second Level Schools**

- Since January 2009 large increase in reported cases of mumps (1900+)
- Those aged 15-24 most affected
- Since 2007 MMR vaccine offered to students in outbreaks in 3<sup>rd</sup> level colleges – poor uptake
- March 2009 National mumps outbreak declared with Population Health and PCCC collaboration
- All senior cycle students (130,000) in 2<sup>nd</sup> level schools to be offered MMR vaccine in school based campaign
- Blitz approach for 3 -4 weeks from 20<sup>th</sup> April 2009
- Larger schools prioritised with smaller schools followed up in September 2009
- Over 25,000 children immunised with an uptake of 71%

**For further information please contact:**

Dr Brenda Corcoran  
 Consultant in Public Health Medicine  
 email: [brenda.corcoran1@hse.ie](mailto:brenda.corcoran1@hse.ie)  
 Phone: 01 867 6108