



Oifig an Stiúrthóra Náisiúnta, Acmhainní Daonna

Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Ospidéal Dr. Steevens'
Baile Átha Cliath 8

Office of the National Director of Human Resources

Health Service Executive
Dr. Steevens' Hospital
Dublin 8

Tel: 01 6352319 Email: nationalhr@hse.ie

David Cullinane T.D.

18th December, 2020

PQ41309/20: To ask the Minister for Health the number of HSE staff who continue to suffer from persistent symptoms or syndromes associated with Covid-19, also known as long Covid; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -David Cullinane

PQ41307/20: To ask the Minister for Health the number of HSE staff who have been out of work due to Covid-19 illness to date; the number currently out of work; and if he will make a statement on the matter. - David Cullinane

Dear Deputy,

I refer to your recent parliamentary questions above which was sent to the HSE for reply. The response below refers to both questions

The HSE records absences based on HSE Strategic Workforce Planning publishes National Absence Report per month which includes an Absence Category titled COVID 19 Absence. The latest report can be accessed at <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/resources/our-workforce/workforce-reporting/national-absence-august-20201.pdf>.

Individual absences are monitored and managed by local management in accordance with the Managing Attendance Policy and related policies. These policies are available on the HSE website at <http://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/Resources/managingattendance.pdf>. The HSEs Managing Attendance Policies apply to all staff.

Under the HSE Managing Attendance Policies an employee is not obliged to disclose the reason for the illness and there is no central data repository on the cause of absence. Information in relation to absenteeism is only collected in respect of the overall level of absenteeism and the reasons for the absence on sick leave are not recorded. Staff who are absent from work due to sickness or ill health for periods in excess of 2 days are required to submit medical certificates to their line manager for the duration of their absence. These certificates, which are confidential, are required to be dated, signed by the medical practitioner and they must state the expected duration of the absence and, where appropriate, the expected date of return. Doctors are not required to state the nature of the illness on the medical certificates.

Health sector absence reporting collates absence rates for our 140,000 employees across Health Service Executive (HSE), 49 hospitals in 7 Hospital Groups (including 18 voluntary hospitals), Community Services (Mental Health, Primary Care, Older Persons & Disability Services) across 9 Community Healthcare Organisations (CHOs), which also includes 35 Voluntary Section 38 Agencies, Health & Wellbeing, Ambulance Services, together with Human Resources, ICT, Finance, Procurement etc. Under usual circumstances national absence rates are reported in percentage terms on the basis of lost time by staff category, certified & self-certified) with each of the services listed above submitting their absence details centrally on a monthly basis. Following the first detected case of COVID-19 in Ireland on 29 February and commencing with March absence, the HSE commenced a process of adapting collection and collation process to also

identify lost time (absence) relating to COVID-19. This measures lost time against available time and is expressed as a percentage and does not record the length of individual the absence. As such the details of the overall estimated number of healthcare staff that have been unable to return to work due to after-effects of Covid-19 are not available nationally. This is managed locally and the information is not held on a national file.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marie O'Sullivan".

Marie O'Sullivan
National HR