



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

Oifig an tUas. Pat Bennett,  
Príomhoifigeach, Eagraíocht Cúram Sláinte  
Pobail, Lár Tíre, An Lú, An Mhí  
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte, Oifig  
Cheantair, Bóthar Ardáin, An Tulach  
Mhór, Co. Uíbh Fhailí.

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21<sup>st</sup> July, 2020

Ms Sorca Clarke T.D.,  
Dáil Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

**Re: Parliamentary Question – 14483/20**

To ask the Minister for Health when day care services will reopen; when each day care service in counties Longford and Westmeath will reopen; when restrictions will be implemented to ensure adherence to health; the activities which may not return; if a reduced amount of attending hours is envisaged upon reopening; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Sorca Clarke

Dear Deputy Clarke,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and outline response as follows.

HSE continue to provide essential general practice and primary care services including public health nursing, residential services for older people and people with disabilities, mental health care services and essential home care supports for people in the community.

In late June National HSE provided guidance issuing a 'return to work safely protocol' which outlined that all employees have a critical role in ensuring that appropriate procedures are followed to suppress COVID 19 in the workplace.

Prior to re-opening services as normal risk assessments are to be undertaken in each workplace/clinic space to ensure that services are in compliance with required social distancing and that all infection control precautions have been put in place.

Work is underway to reintroduce the health services in our CHO that were reduced or suspended as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the HSE has published a framework for a safe return to our health services, with the protection of everyone in our care, and all our staff, as a priority.

We are continuing to issue high-level national guidance for all services and to activate our plans for the delivery of essential healthcare services in the safest way possible. The risks of a second COVID-19 surge and local outbreaks are real and being taken into account in our plans.

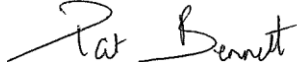
As services resume we are making changes to ensure social distancing is possible. This will reduce our capacity in our services. We also need to continue to implement strict infection prevention and control measures across our services. Where possible, services are working to connect with people using telehealth, providing consultations on phone or on video calls.

We need to deliver services in a different way to make sure we keep everybody, clients and staff as safe as possible as we do this. This is challenging and is going to take some time and we will need your patience as the health services that were paused or restricted now resume.

It is really important that a safe, consistent approach is taken across the CHO in how we return to work over the coming weeks and months to provide health services with the lowest possible risk.

I trust the above is in order and please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any further queries in this regard.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pat Bennett". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

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Pat Bennett  
Chief Officer CHO Area 8