

21st July 2020

Deputy Louise O'Reilly
Dáil Éireann
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

Re: PQ 13372/20

Question: “To ask the Minister for Health his plans to ensure that the testing of service users under the testing mechanism for all service users as part of respite care packages for service users returning for respite care to take place 72 hours before they avail of respite will be carried out in their own homes; and if the results will be confirmed to the families to share with the facility in order that these vulnerable persons do not have to travel to a hospital or testing centre to have their Covid-19 test carried out”.

Dear Deputy O'Reilly,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question which has been referred by the Minister for Health to the Health Service Executive for direct response.

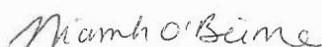
I wish to advise that in the HPSC report “Interim Public Health, Infection Prevention & Control Guidelines on the Prevention and Management of COVID-19 Cases and Outbreaks in Residential Care Facilities”, it outlines advice with regards to admissions, transfers to and discharges from Residential Care Facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The advice outlined does state that a COVID-19 test “can be facilitated in the community prior to the anticipated admission date, the test should be taken within 72 hours of admission”. This testing can be arranged in a Community Testing Centre or by the National Ambulance Service in a person's home setting where appropriate. In line with testing policy all negative test results are texted to those who have taken the test or their relevant next of kin where necessary. Positive results are communicated by telephone by the Contact Tracing Team.

As part of our strategic review to the design and development of an enduring Operating Model for Testing and Contract Tracing, we are constantly reviewing our different pathways in conjunction with Public Health to address demands for testing services.

I trust this addresses your question.

Yours sincerely,



Niamh O'Beirne
National Lead for Testing and Tracing