



2nd June 2020

Deputy Róisín Shortall,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

**PQ ref: 6218/20 - "To ask the Minister for Health the number of residents and staff in nursing homes nationwide; and the number of same that have been tested for Covid-19.
-Róisín Shortall"**

Dear Deputy Shortall,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for response.

There are 586 nursing homes listed nationwide. 440 Private and 146 Public. Mass testing of all nursing homes, in April/early May, has been completed. Where there were Covid-19 outbreaks or suspected outbreaks, at that time, testing of staff and residents took place (371 locations). In locations where there was no confirmed or suspected outbreaks, at that time, testing of staff only was undertaken. While this programme of mass testing has been completed, the HSE's public health departments continue to respond to outbreaks as required.

A range of approaches were taken to coordinate the mass testing, in order to support the completion of the process as rapidly as possible. For example, some services utilised the National Ambulance Service for completing testing of all staff and residents in one large swoop; for other services, testing kits were distributed to the centres where testing was conducted on-site by staff trained to do so. For others, testing for some staff and residents was completed on site, while some staff were booked to attend a community testing site, when they were not available to attend the centre for testing on a specific day. Lists of staff and residents were not maintained in a way that can support the provision of the actual number of staff and residents tested nationwide. The test booking system, Swift Q, did not allow for the direct link of a person to a nursing home. The systems continue to be enhanced to support more efficient end to end processes, from referral to result and it is intended that these enhancements will include an ability to link an individual to a congregated facility, where public health indicates a requirement to do so.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,



Siobhán McArdle,
Head of Operations Primary Care,
Community Operations