



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

**Office of Contact Management Programme  
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Deputy Sean Canney  
Dail Eireann  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2

**To ask the Minister for Health if he will consider using the Army Reserve to help with contact tracing for Covid-19 (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. PQ 33354/20 - Deputy Seán Canney**

Dear Deputy Canney

I refer to the above parliamentary question which has been referred to the HSE for direct reply.

Contact tracing is an important part of the public health response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Contact tracing is normally carried out by specialists in public health medicine, and their teams, and it is conducted under primary legislation.

In order to create additional capacity to meet the demands of Covid-19 the HSE established the Contact Management Programme, which has recruited people to carry out contact tracing, under the Medical Officer of Health legislation.

At present the HSE is recruiting 800 contact tracers, and expect that the recruitment process will be complete in mid-December. There is a significant amount of training and support required when new contact tracers are recruited. There is a detailed training programme, which is provided over four days, and then there is on the job supervision until the tracers are confident in dealing with communicating with members of the public regarding a sensitive public health issue.

As the HSE is recruiting the new contact tracers, there are currently in excess of 600 people deployed to contact tracing around the country. This includes over 250 new recruits, HSE people who have been provided temporarily to support contact tracing, and colleagues from Government departments and the Defence Forces.

Currently we have three units of the Defence Forces working on contact tracing, and the Army cadets were also deployed to contact tracing for a week, ending 30<sup>th</sup> October.

I note the suggestion of using the Army Reserve and we will certainly consider that once the current recruitment phase is complete.

I trust this addresses your question.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kilian McGrane', written in a cursive style.

**Kilian McGrane**  
**Contact Management Programme**