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27<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Deputy Denis Naughten,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

**PQ 29524/20 - To ask the Minister for Health when health staff such as speech and language therapists and occupational therapists currently carrying out contact tracing will return to their pre-Covid-19 roles; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

**-Denis Naughten**

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Dear Deputy Naughten,

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.

The key document in terms of returning staff to their substantive posts is titled "Service Continuity in a Covid Environment. A Strategic Framework for Delivery".

This framework document was prepared in June 2020 and provides the framework for staff, including Speech and Language Therapists and Occupational Therapists, to return to their substantive posts from Covid related work.

A link to the document is provided below:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/service-continuity-in-a-covid-environment-a-strategic-framework-for-delivery1.pdf>

Implementing the road map for staff to return to their substantive posts is a priority for Community Services that is being balanced with the dynamic and fluid requirements for Community Testing. HR Community Operations have given a commitment to the Trade Unions to agree a plan for this framework as soon as practicable.

The HSE is actively recruiting testing contact tracing staff to provide standing capacity for current and future demand. By the Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> of October there will be 280 people recruited, and the process will continue until there are 800 people recruited, trained and deployed to contact tracing centres.

Given the unprecedented level of confirmed cases at present, all people who are currently deployed to contact tracing are needed to continue in their current role. As soon as the new recruits are fully operational, then staff redeployed to the contact tracing function from other areas in the HSE, will return to their substantive roles.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maurice Farnan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M' and a long, sweeping tail.

Maurice Farnan  
A/A.N.D. Community Operations