



Ceann na Seirbhíse Míchumas
Eagraíocht Chúram Sláinte Limistéar 1
(An Cabhán, Dún na nGall, Liatroim, Muineachán & Sligeach)
Áras Isacc Butt, Bealach Féich, Tír Chonaill F93 YV9R
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13th October 2020

Deputy Pearse Doherty
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

PQ ref 29655/20

St Joseph's Community Hospital and Ard Greine Court, Stranorlar, Co Donegal.

To ask the Minister for Health the procedures in place for Covid-19 testing for staff and residents at two facilities in County Donegal (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Doherty

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 the following outlines the position.

The National Serial Testing Programme is currently being implemented within Older Persons Services (OPS) only, based on the fact that most of the outbreaks experienced across Ireland during the first spike of COVID-19 occurred within OPS.

The HSE is currently in Phase III of the National Serial Testing Programme. Phase I included all residential community facilities under OPS, Mental Health Services, Disability Services and some of the Section 38/Section 39 facilities. As an outcome of the results arising from Phase I, the Phase II Serial Testing Programme was reserved for OPS only; and Mental Health and Disability Services, along with Section 38/Section 39 facilities, have not been included since then.

When the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE) reviews the results of each Phase of Serial Testing, it assesses whether any further services need to be included in the Serial Testing Programme. To date, all Serial Testing Programmes follow where the greatest number of cases arises.

St Joseph's Community Hospital, along with the other ten community hospitals in Co Donegal, is part of the serial voluntary testing which is carried out on a fortnightly basis. Residents in St Joseph's were tested in April and July and are currently being tested on a clinical-needs basis. All admissions/transfers to residential care facilities are tested for COVID-19 at least 72 hours prior to admission, whether they are transferring from acute or community services.

In respect of Ard Gréine Court, a mass testing for residents and staff has been carried out. Currently, there is no confirmed case in Ard Gréine Court. There is no immediate plan to carry out another mass testing at Ard Gréine Court. This decision is based on advice from the Infection Prevention & Control Service and in line with Public Health guidance. It is vitally important that everyone adheres to the COVID-19 mitigation measures that are in place. These are outlined in the CHO1 Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Team Safety Pause document which is available to all services in all locations.

Also on site, the following measures are in place:

1. Site Specific Service Response & Contingency Plan Residential Services in the Context of COVID-19
2. A suite of risk assessments to mitigate risks associated with COVID-19
3. Implementation of the CHO1 IPC Team Safety Pause throughout the working day
4. Staff Safety Pause at the beginning of each shift and daily temperature checks
5. COVID-19 folders available in all centres containing the most up-to-date information on managing the virus

I trust that this is of assistance but please do not hesitate to contact me if you require anything further.

Yours sincerely



Edel Quinn
Head of Service Disability CHO1
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