

**4<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

Deputy Michael Healy-Rae  
Dáil Éireann  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2

**Re: PQ 30693/20 Question: “To ask the Minister for Health if he will address a matter regarding Covid-19 contact tracing, If a person test positive for COVID 19 and is informed by HSE can you please clarify when the contract tracing person rings them how far back do they go for names of contacts ie 24 hours, 48 hours 72 hours etc and if he will make a statement on the matter.”.**

Dear Deputy Healy-Rae,

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 apologise for the delay in issuing a response to your above question.

Due to the current demands of the Covid-19 pandemic and the numerous queries we have received to date it has taken longer than I would've liked to respond.

The contact tracing process is a three call process. Call 1 informs the patient of their result, checks their health status and provides the necessary Public Health advice. The current time it takes contact tracing to inform a case is 0.2 days. Call 2 collects the details of people who are deemed close contacts, from 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms (or 24 hours before the date of their test, if they have no symptoms) until the time the case has self-isolated. Call 3 is calling the close contacts, advising them to restrict their movements and arranging for them to be referred for a test. Since the 21<sup>st</sup> October all close contacts get an SMS message advising them that they are a close contact, to restrict their movements, and that the HSE will call them.

When a person becomes a close contact of a confirmed case, they are referred for a test on day 0 and day 7. Day 0 is the day they are identified as a close contact, and day 7 is seven days after they were in contact with the confirmed case.

I trust this addresses your question.

Yours sincerely,



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**Niamh O'Beirne**  
**National Lead for Testing and Tracing**