



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig Niamh O'Beirne, Ceannasaí Náisiúnta Tástála agus Rianaithe
Ospidéal an Dr. Steevens, Baile Átha Cliath 8, D08 W2A8

Office of Niamh O' Beirne, National Lead for Testing & Tracing
Dr Steevens' Hospital, Steevens' Lane, Dublin D08 W2A8

28th September 2020

Deputy Ged Nash
Dáil Éireann
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

Re: PQ 23464/20

Question: “To ask the Minister for Health the reason the HSE has not provided a Covid-19 testing centre in Drogheda, County Louth; if the HSE will review this position; and if he will make a statement on the matter”.

Dear Deputy Nash,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question which has been referred by the Minister for Health to the Health Service Executive for direct response. There are Community Testing Centres currently in operation in Dundalk at MuirhevnaMor Health Centre and in Slane at Slane Health Centres to serve the population of Louth and Meath. Both centres are long established and offer in excess of 750 appointments on individual days.

Persons from Drogheda are currently being referred for testing in Dundalk and Slane. The centre in Slane is 14 kilometres from Drogheda, and the centre in Dundalk is 34 kilometres from Drogheda. Both locations are accessible in under 30 minutes travel time from Drogheda. At present, there are no plans for a pop-up testing centre in Drogheda, however, referral demand in any area is subject to ongoing review and evaluation against available capacity.

As part of the HSE Test and Trace Operational Model a comprehensive assessment of locations is being undertaken. The criteria, including suitability and sustainability of the location as a long term testing centre, as well as the location of centres relative to observed travel times, was considered. This assessment concluded that the facility identified in Ardee best met these criteria noting travel times from both Dundalk and Drogheda less than 25 minutes. The facility in Ardee is scheduled to open the week commencing October 5th 2020.

The HSE Covid-19 Community Testing Service is committed to the timely provision of safe, accessible, quality swabbing services within the community setting. Testing Centres are continuously evaluated to ensure that capacity meets demand, including extension of opening hours and addition of testing stations to existing sites. Further actions including the use of pop-up Testing Centres have been initiated in other areas where these actions were not deemed sufficient to meet demand.

I trust this clarifies the issue you have raised.

Yours sincerely,

Niamh O'Beirne

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National Lead for Testing and Tracing