

28th September 2020

Deputy Neale Richmond
Dáil Éireann
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

PQ 23595/20: To ask the Minister for Health the status for those working in contact tracing in University College Dublin regarding the offering of pay and contracts; and if he will make a statement on the matter

Dear Deputy Richmond,

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

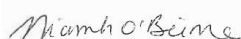
In early August, following a significant increase in confirmed Covid-19 cases, the HSE implemented its contact tracing escalation plan, and contacted previous contact tracing centres for support. UCD were the first to respond and from Sunday 9th August have provided essential additional capacity to meet the increase in numbers. The HSE outlined that they were looking for a standing contact tracing service, operating seven days per week, 12 hours per day, and that UCD could recruit their current volunteer pool as part of building that capacity. The HSE also confirmed that the staff hired, who worked from 9th August, would be remunerated.

In the period since 9th of August, the HSE have had numerous engagements with UCD to determine the best model to achieve this objective. At a meeting in UCD on 1st September, a revised approach was agreed with the HSE hiring the necessary staff through a recruitment agency, and UCD providing the accommodation and oversight. The HSE would underwrite all the costs associated with the contact tracing centre.

The HSE is recruiting 500 contact tracers as part of the overall Test and Trace function. Recruitment is via an online portal and this portal was provided to colleagues in UCD week ending 10th September. Applications were made via the portal, and interviews commenced on Tuesday 22nd September. Candidates who are successful will be offered employment in one of the HSE's contact tracing centres, and it is expected that those successful candidates will be notified shortly. The same process applies to all candidates, including those providing the service in UCD.

I trust the above clarifies the queries you have raised.

Yours sincerely,



Niamh O'Beirne
National Lead for Testing and Tracing