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13th October 2020

Deputy David Cullinane
Dáil Éireann,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2

Re:

PQ number	PQ question
25426/20	To ask the Minister for Health the protocol in place between both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland for contact tracing as it relates to cross-Border workers; and if he will make a statement on the matter.
25427/20	To ask the Minister for Health the procedure for communication between the HSE and HSC to ensure that cross-Border workers are included in contact tracing; and if he will make a statement on the matter
25428/20	To ask the Minister for Health the procedures in place in circumstances in which a person works here but lives in Northern Ireland and is a close contact of a confirmed Covid-19 case at the workplace here; the jurisdiction responsible for contact tracing in this event; if residents of one jurisdiction are included in contact tracing conducted by the other jurisdiction; the situation in the inverse scenario; and if he will make a statement on the matter
25429/20	To ask the Minister for Health if work colleagues in Northern Ireland of a person that lives here but works in Northern Ireland are included in contact tracing and considered close contacts and vice versa; and if he will make a statement on the matter

Dear Deputy Cullinane,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Questions which have been referred by the Minister for Health to the Health Service Executive for direct response.

25426/20

Cross border contact tracing relating to cross border workers is undertaken through the collaboration of contact tracing programmes in the Republic of Ireland (RoI) and Northern Ireland (NI) and the International Health Regulations National Focal Point for RoI, the HSE-Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC). Staff in the contact tracing programme in RoI alert the HPSC of cases of COVID-19 identified in the RoI who work in NI or who visited NI during their infectious period and of close contacts of RoI cases of COVID-19 who reside in NI. HPSC staff in turn provide this information to the contact tracing programme in NI (or Public Health Dr on-call in NI if out of hours) for action in

accordance with public health guidance in NI. Contact tracing staff in NI alert the HPSC to cases of COVID-19 diagnosed in NI who work in RoI or who visited RoI during their infectious period and close contacts of NI cases who reside in RoI. HPSC staff in turn inform RoI contact tracers or the appropriate regional Public Health authorities in RoI for action in accordance with public health guidance in RoI.

25427/20

The communication channel between HSE and HSC NI is described above and is via the IHR National Focal Point in the RoI, HPSC.

25428/20

If a resident of NI is a close contact of a case of COVID-19 associated with their place of work in RoI, they will initially be identified by contact tracers in RoI. They will receive public health advice pertaining to their workplace from public health authorities RoI, similar to other workplace contacts. Their contact details will subsequently be provided to HPSC to forward to the contact tracing programme in NI. There, they will be managed as a close contact of a case of COVID-19 in accordance with NI public health guidance.

If a resident of RoI is a close contact of a case of COVID-19 associated with their place of work in NI, they will initially be identified by contact tracers in NI. Their contact details will be provided to HPSC to forward to the contact tracing programme or regional Department of Public Health in RoI. They will be managed as a close contact of a case of COVID-19 in accordance with RoI public health guidance.

25429/20

If a case of COVID-19 tests positive in RoI and advises that he/she works in NI, contact tracers in RoI will provide HPSC with the case's details and their workplace in NI. HPSC will pass this information to NI public health colleagues. The investigation of the case's workplace will be undertaken by public health colleagues in NI and close contacts identified within the workplace will be managed in accordance with NI public health guidance.

If a case of COVID-19 tests positive in NI and advises that he/she works in RoI, contact tracers in NI will provide HPSC with the case's details and their workplace in RoI. HPSC will pass this information to the regional Department of Public Health, where the workplace is located. The investigation of the case's workplace will be undertaken by regional public health colleagues in RoI and close contacts identified within the workplace will be managed in accordance with RoI public health guidance.

If you require any further information or clarification please do contact us.

Yours sincerely,



**Dr John Cuddihy,
Interim Director of HPSC,
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