



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

30th September 2020

Deputy Sorca Clarke
Dáil Éireann
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

Re: PQ 25625/20

Question: “To ask the Minister for Health when the Covid-19 testing centre in Longford opened; the number of tests that were carried out when it closed; and if there are plans to reopen the centre”.

Dear Deputy Clarke,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question which has been referred by the Minister for Health to the Health Service Executive for direct response. The HSE have provided large scale Covid19 testing for the community at testing centre locations throughout the country since March in line with overall demand for testing. Covid-19 Community Testing Centres are operating at 33 locations currently around the country with the vast majority of the population having access to a testing centre within 1 hour of their residence.

Specifically, in county Longford, a Community Testing Centre was opened at St Joseph's Hospital on 16th March and subsequently on 15th April moved to Sean Connolly Barracks. This centre last operated on 10th July. During this time a total of 1867 appointments for Covid-19 testing were offered at these Testing Centres. The HSE continually monitor the demand for testing on both a national and regional level and in order to ensure that Covid-19 testing is available to all persons quickly with testing centres historically operating in order to meet this demand. On days that the Longford testing centre was not operational, persons requiring Covid19 testing were offered appointments in the closest available testing centre, typically in Mullingar or Athlone.

As part of the HSE Test and Trace Operational Model a Community Testing centre is planned for Longford. A comprehensive assessment of locations is currently being undertaken and criteria, including suitability and sustainability of the location as a long term Testing Centre as well as the location of this centre relative to observed travel times to test centre is being used for this assessment. A final decision on location is expected shortly with the goal to have the facility operational within 2020.

I trust this clarifies the issues you have raised.

Yours sincerely,

Niamh O'Beirne

Niamh O'Beirne
National Lead for Testing and Tracing

