



16th Dec. 2021

Deputy Gary Gannon,
Dáil Éireann,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2

Issued via email to: gary.gannon@oireachtas.ie

PQ Number: 61110/21

Question: To ask the Minister for Health the status of the trials of antigen tests in the early childhood sector.

Dear Deputy Gannon,

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 Health Service Executive working with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth supported the roll-out of an antigen testing pilot programmes in a number of childcare facilities. Over 200 staff across 19 childcare sites completed the pilot programme between August and November 2021. The purpose of the pilots was to assess the operational feasibility of rolling out an antigen testing programme. The HSE, working with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth used these pilots to learn more about how antigen testing might be used more widely in childcare settings. To note, the pilot programme involved staff only and the testing of children was outside the scope of the pilot.

The pilot programme is now complete and the learnings from this are being used to inform the antigen testing now being rolled out across childcare settings including Primary schools and Early Learning Centres.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Damien McCallion
National Director
National Lead Test & Trace and Vaccination Programme