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2nd March 2021

Deputy Fergus O'Dowd,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 8468/21 - To ask the Minister for Health the number of healthcare workers who tested positive for Covid-19 and were subsequently placed in accommodation provided by that healthcare facility and not placed into dedicated accommodation provided by the HSE under the healthcare workers temporary accommodation scheme; the subsequent actions carried out by public health to ensure that any worker or resident in such accommodation was tested for a possible exposure to Covid-19; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

-Fergus O'Dowd

Dear Deputy O'Dowd,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for response.

The HSE runs a National Self-Isolation Facility at Citywest Hotel which opened to admissions on 1st April 2020 under the governance of HSE Community Operations. The service is provided for people affected by COVID-19, including Health Care Workers (positive or suspected cases, or close contacts of confirmed cases) who have the capacity for self-management, are required to self-isolate but are unable to do so. The purpose of the unit is to provide a safe environment for residents to self-isolate and to minimise the risk of community transmission of COVID-19. Referrals to this facility are made by a discharging hospital, GP, Public Health doctor, contact tracing team or other appropriate medical physician via a dedicated email using a standard referral form. To date circa 2,321 people have been accommodated at this facility.

Anyone testing positive, healthcare workers or members of the public are referred to this designated facility should they not be in a position to self-isolate at home.

In addition, a temporary accommodation scheme for Healthcare Workers is in place nationally since early April 2020. This scheme, which is temporary and in response to COVID-19, ensures temporary accommodation is available at suitable locations within a Healthcare Worker's immediate work area. The purpose of the scheme is to ensure that the health of the healthcare worker and the people with whom they normally live is protected as well as protecting our ability to continue to provide essential health care services. The temporary accommodation scheme is **not** available for Healthcare Workers who test positive and are clinically required to self-isolate for 14 days. Healthcare Workers who are clinically required to self-isolate should be referred to the National HSE Self-Isolation Facility at Citywest.

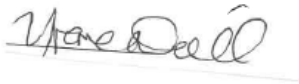
The temporary staff accommodation scheme for Healthcare Workers will continue as long as we are in a COVID-19 environment, there is demand and staff meet the eligibility criteria as summarised below.

Healthcare Workers:

- whose family members are self-isolating and who are therefore not able to return home
- who are living with vulnerable persons
- who require emergency accommodation due to urgent response or mitigating factors
- who require accommodation in order to facilitate rosters
- returning from overseas who are contracted to work and require temporary accommodation (following the required period of self-isolation)
- who reside in congregated domestic living arrangements e.g. hostels, direct provision centres etc.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,



Yvonne O'Neill,
Interim National Director,
Community Operations