



Oifig an Leas-Stiúrthóir Ginearálta-Oibríochtaí  
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhísí Sláinte  
Ospidéal Dr. Steevens'  
Baile Átha Cliath 8

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3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021

Mr. Colm Burke, TD  
Dáil Eireann  
Leinster House  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2  
By email to: [colm.burke@oireachtas.ie](mailto:colm.burke@oireachtas.ie)

**PQ Number:** 8809/21

**To ask the Minister for Health when it is envisaged that non-Covid-19 routine medical care will resume in line with the Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

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Dear Deputy Burke,

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.

As you will be aware, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has required significant rearrangement of services including redeployment of staff to ensure the health of the public.

The HSE's Winter Planning within the COVID-19 Pandemic, as referenced in the Government's overall Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19 was developed within the context of an increasing demand for unscheduled care, the need to support service continuity and resumption of services and delivering essential healthcare in a COVID-19 environment. The Winter Plan is being implemented through a range of initiatives including additional community Assessment Hubs and GP access to diagnostics. In addition, work is currently underway to finalise a revised version of the HSE's Safe Return to Services Plan first published in July 2020.

In its response to the current surge of the pandemic, the HSE has continued to follow the guidance of public health in relation to the safe delivery of health services. Notwithstanding the reduction in numbers of COVID 19 cases, all services are required to protect COVID pathways of care through the phased prioritised reintroduction of services and a continued focus on hospital avoidance through the ongoing development of enhanced community services.

Decisions in relation to the type and volume of activity will be made at site level based on local case numbers, available capacity and guidance from national clinical leads. Ongoing vigilance with regard to infection prevention and control measures will be essential given the vulnerability of healthcare settings to COVID 19 transmission. The need to operate parallel COVID and non-COVID pathways will also impact on the pace of service restoration.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

  
Anne O'Connor  
Chief Operations Officer