



Louise O'Reilly, T.D.
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

15th February, 2021

PQ: 4046/21

To ask the Minister for Health if his attention has been drawn to HSE employees, specifically workers in area (details supplied) being requested to attend on site for work during the current level 5 lockdown to complete work which they are able to do remotely and carried out remotely during previous lockdowns. -Louise O'Reilly

HSE Primary Care Reimbursement Service

Dear Deputy O'Reilly,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (Reference 4046/21), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

PCRS is responsible for making in excess of €3 billion in annual payments to Primary Care Contractors, suppliers of essential High Tech medicines and to Acute Hospitals and others across a range of schemes and arrangements.

PCRS is also responsible for ensuring that eligibility is in place for qualifying persons for primary care schemes such as the General Medical Services (Medical Card and GP Visit Card) Scheme, the Drugs Payment Scheme, the Long Term Illness Scheme and other schemes and arrangements. These schemes and reimbursement arrangements are essential to the operation of the Health Service.

PCRS as a consequence is designated as an essential service.

Throughout the pandemic, PCRS has ensured that all necessary reimbursement systems to underpin the arrangements for newly introduced

Covid-19 services provided by Primary Care Contractors have been put in place in a timely manner.

At the same time, PCRS has invested significant time and effort in reducing the numbers of staff on site in its two buildings including investing in large numbers of laptops, improvements in technology and scanning capability.

However it is not possible to maintain the essential services for which PCRS is responsible without maintaining some staff on site to ensure that all payments are made to the Primary Care Contractors who have provided essential clinical services throughout the pandemic. PCRS receives significant numbers of manual reimbursement claims. PCRS also continues to support those individuals who are not in a position to make eligibility applications online.

PCRS systems have underpinned the reimbursement of Covid-19 respiratory consults and telephone consults by General Practitioners, the reimbursement of Pharmacists and General Practitioners for the administration of the 2020-2021 Influenza vaccine and imminently the reimbursement of the administration of Covid-19 vaccines by General practitioners to individuals over 85 years of age (in addition to all of the services PCRS is required to reimburse in the ordinary course of events).

PCRS staff have also supported multiple other Covid-19 programmes, such as processing data from NAS from Nursing Home testing in Q2 2020, booking tests for Nursing Home serial testing in June-July 2020, inputting of data into the CIDR system, booking Covid-19 vaccinations for General Practitioners and their staff and providing pharmacy support to those mass vaccination clinics .

Staff whose tasks are currently capable of being carried out at home are working from home. More PCRS staff (over 50%) are currently working at home than at any point throughout the pandemic. Those staff for whom it is necessary to attend in the workplace do so in compliance with all Public Health requirements.

Staff have not been asked to attend on site to carry out work that they are able to complete at home.

Yours sincerely,



Suzanne Doyle
Primary Care Eligibility & Reimbursement Service