



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Stiúrthóra Náisiúnta um Phleanáil agus Chlaochlú Straitéiseach
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11th February 2021

Deputy Colm Burke
Dail Eireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

RE: PQ 44714/20

Dear Deputy Burke,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to your above referenced Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health. The question concerned was referred by colleagues in Parliamentary Affairs to Strategic Planning and Transformation in the HSE for review and direct response, as we are managing the HSE's Covid-19 Contact Management Programme (CMP).

Please accept my sincere apologies for the delay in issuing this response to you.

Parliamentary Question: To ask the Minister for Health the relative cost of contact tracing centres (details supplied) to the 60 specialist public health doctors over the period of the Covid-19 pandemic; the party which is legally responsible for the management of all complex contact tracing such as all outbreaks in schools and workplaces and all prevention in vulnerable groups such as direct provision residents and the Travelling community; and if he will make a statement on the matter – Deputy Burke

Response: Thank you for your question. Contact tracing is a key function of Public Health investigation and control of the COVID-19 virus. It is undertaken by Regional Departments of Public Health; the Contact Management Programme (CMP) - Contact Tracing Centres (CTCs); which are part of the HSE's Test & Trace service; Acute Hospitals including Infection Prevention Control teams; and Occupational Health Services. It involves contacting people who have tested positive for COVID-19; identifying and following up with their close contacts; providing appropriate public health advice, including monitoring for signs and symptoms of the virus; requesting people to restrict their movements; to self-isolate and referring people for a test where applicable. Collaborative working relationships and regular communication across all contact tracing stakeholders is necessary to ensure the effective management of cases, clusters and outbreaks.

The pandemic has created a highly competitive recruitment environment in an already very limited pool of specialised public health medical professionals. In the HSE's pandemic operating model and workforce plan one SPHM is costed at €148,267 (please note for the purpose of the pandemic operating model, an SPHM was costed at €116,099, plus 11.05% PRSI, plus 15% non-pay.) so by 60 persons this would be €8,896,020.



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The role of the CMP and its CTCs is to support and enable the regional Department of Public Health to undertake contact tracing at scale. CTCs were established with public health clinical governance to augment the capacity of Public Health Departments, by managing a high volume of lower complexity cases and contacts. This allows for the optimising of the capacity of Specialist Public Health Medical (SPHMs) to manage more complex cases, including the management of outbreaks/clusters, and public health risk assessment. The CMP was established in March 2020 and our CTCs are located in Galway, Limerick, Cork and Dublin. The estimated staff costs for contact tracing in 2020 is approximately €6.3m.

I trust this response deals with your query however; if you have any further queries in relation to this matter please do not hesitate to contact this office.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Ryan
Business Manager
Office of the National Director, Strategic Planning and Transformation and Head of CMP



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