



**10<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

Deputy Róisín Shortall  
Dáil Éireann  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2

**Re: PQ 12605/21 Question: “To ask the Minister for Health if his attention has been drawn to reports of a lack of proper social distancing outside of busy Covid-19 testing centres; the steps his Department is taking to ensure that social distancing is adhered to outside of testing centres; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”**

Dear Deputy Shortall,

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 HSE provides Covid-19 testing in the community as part of its pandemic response. There are currently 35 Testing Centres in operation nationally, with at least one Testing Centre in each county. The HSE take the Public Health guidelines for Covid-19 very seriously and promote for all staff and attendees to Testing Centres to adhere to this guidance.

Centres operate on an appointment only basis and a large number of people attend centres which use a ‘Test in Car’ model. The ‘Walk in’ Test Centres are large facilities which are designed to accommodate social distancing requirements. People are offered an appointment time, minimising the numbers on site at any one time. There is also clear signage in place to alert people to the need to observe social distancing, and this message is reinforced by staff at the Testing Centres.

I trust this addresses your question.

Yours sincerely,

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**Niamh O'Beirne**  
**National Lead Testing and Tracing**