

3<sup>rd</sup> Dec. 2021

Deputy Mairéad Farrell,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2

Issued via email to: [mairead.farrell@oireachtas.ie](mailto:mairead.farrell@oireachtas.ie)

**PQ Number: 58829/21**

**Questions: To ask the Minister for Health if he has plans to provide additional PCR testing centres to rural areas such as Connemara given the increased demand for tests and rising case numbers; and if he will make a statement on the matter**

Dear Deputy Farrell,

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 has operated Community Testing Centres in Galway and Mayo since March 2020. In line with the National Test and Trace Operational Model, which ensures at least one testing centre in each county and providing access to over 90% of the population to a test centre within 45 minutes travel time, a long term location was established to serve the people of Co. Galway at Galway Airport and in Castlebar to serve the people of Co Mayo. These sites were selected following a detailed evaluation as they best met defined criteria including suitability and sustainability of the location as a long term testing centre, as well as the location of centres relative to observed travel times. An additional long term site was added in Galway City in October 2020.

The HSE continually evaluate options to augment capacity in specific areas experiencing very high level of demands through the use of pop-up Testing Centres. We have placed such pop-up centres from time to time in different locations throughout both Co Galway and Co Mayo. Presently, with high demand for testing nationwide, these pop-up teams are being prioritised for areas with particularly high demands for testing.

The HSE Covid-19 Community Testing Service is committed to the timely provision of safe, accessible, quality swabbing services within the community setting.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,



**Damien McCallion**  
**National Director**  
**National Lead Test & Trace and Vaccination Programme**