



Oifig an Stiúrthóra Náisiúnta, Acmhainní Daonna
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhísí Sláinte
Ospidéal Dr. Steevens'
Baile Átha Cliath 8

Office of the National Director of Human Resources
Health Service Executive
Dr. Steevens' Hospital
Dublin 8
Tel: 01 6352319 Email: nationalhr@hse.ie

Carol Nolan T.D.

11th May, 2022

PQ 20552/22 To ask the Minister for Health if he has conducted an analysis of the potential impact of long-Covid diagnoses among healthcare staff on the operation and functioning of the health service; if he will make such an analysis available; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Carol Nolan

Dear Deputy,

I refer to your recent parliamentary question above which was sent to the HSE for reply.

The HSE continues to monitor employee absence due to Covid infection, and those who remain out of work with long Covid (defined as those who experience undifferentiated signs and symptoms for more than twelve weeks after initial onset of infection). The HSE has an established process for supporting Health Care Workers (HCWs) to return to work following illness or injury – see the 'Rehabilitation of Employees Back to Work After Illness or Injury Policy & Procedure' -

<https://healthservice.hse.ie/filelibrary/staff/rehabilitation-of-employees-back-to-work-after-illness-policy.pdf>.

HCWs can also access psychological support via our Employee Assistance Programme, which is a free counselling service for HSE employees.

This policy outlines the process for HCWs out of work, which includes HCWs with Long Covid. The employees are referred to the Occupational Health Service and are assessed in relation to fitness for work. Occupational Health Services make recommendations for reasonable accommodations where relevant.

The policy outlines the process for planning the employees return to work following long term absence. It also outlines the process for HCWs where the employee is unable to return to work in their substantive position. In this case it specifies 'options for suitable alternative duties, or alternative employment options will be fully explored'. This is dealt with on a case by case basis. These employees can also access psychological support via our Employee Assistance Programme, which is a free counselling service for HSE employees.

The question of establishing specific HCW pathways for Long Covid services is currently with the Long Covid Oversight Group.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marie O'Sullivan".

Marie O'Sullivan

National HR