



19th Jan. 2022

Deputy Pa Daly,
Dáil Éireann,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2

Issued via email to: pa.daly@oireachtas.ie

PQ Number: 1387/22

Question: To ask the Minister for Health if additional Covid-19 PCR testing centres will have sufficient staff such that they can remain fully in operation during scheduled hours; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Daly,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question which has been referred by the Minister for Health to the Health Service Executive for direct response.

We have seen an extremely high demand for Covid-19 testing at our community testing centres in the last number of weeks which reflected the high prevalence of the disease and other illnesses at this time.

The Community Testing service was established initially to support the delivery of 15,000 appointments per day for Covid-19 tests. A number of additional measures have been implemented to increase that daily testing figure for peak periods to over 30,000 appointments per day. We have increased the number of staff in the Community Testing centres, and have engaged with private testing providers for additional capacity who are providing appointments to those requiring a Covid-19 test on behalf of HSE. This has provided on average just over 34,000 appointments offered each day between the 1st to 14th January.

The HSE continually monitors the demand for testing on both a national, regional and local level in order to ensure that Covid-19 testing is available to all persons quickly. Testing Centres opening hours may alter in response to observed demand. As needed, increased capacity for testing is added. This is accomplished through the extension of testing centre opening hours, expansion of available testing stations within a centre and, as needed, the set-up of additional temporary testing centres. Testing Centres are managed to ensure that adequate staff are available to meet any additional demands. We are satisfied that there is adequate resourcing in place for the surge capacity required.

The HSE Covid-19 Community Testing Service is committed to the timely provision of safe, accessible, quality swabbing services within the community setting. To note Covid-19 testing is one part of the strategy in relation to managing the pandemic. It is key that the public continue to follow Public Health guidance, such as hand hygiene, mask wearing and keeping socially distanced to help in the prevention of the spread of Covid-19.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

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