



Oifig Ceannasaí Oibríochtaí,
Oibríochtaí Pobail, Cúram Príomhúil

Seomra 243, Ospidéal Dr Steevens,
Lána Steevens, Baile Átha Cliath 8.
D08 W2A8.

Office of the Head of Operations,
Community Operations - Primary Care

Rm 243, Dr Steevens Hospital,
Steevens Lane, Dublin 8. D08 W2A8.

www.hse.ie
[@hselive](https://twitter.com/hselive)

T: 01 6352209/2682
E: community.primarycare@hse.ie

18th July 2022

Deputy Róisín Shortall,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 38462/22 – To ask the Minister for Health the reasons that psychologist posts were not included in the interim model of care for long-Covid; if the Model of Care has been revised to include psychologists; the number of these posts that will be provided by clinic; the number that have been hired to date; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

- Róisín Shortall

Dear Deputy Shortall,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (PQ 38462/22) which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

The HSE interim Model of Care (MoC) for Long Covid was finalised in September 2021. The aim of the MoC is to provide a national approach to provision of services and supports for patients experiencing prolonged symptoms of Covid-19. It sets out a framework for the provision of these services and supports spanning General Practice, Community Services, Acute Hospitals and Mental Health Services. The resultant Interim Model of Care recommended the development of eight Post-Acute Clinics and six Long Covid clinics. There was provision in the Model of Care from the start for Psychiatric/Psychological input, as well as a recognition of the need for neurocognitive supports.

Establishment of Post-Acute and Long Covid Clinics will be an initial priority for implementation of the MoC. The original MoC identifies the resources and personnel required for each of these clinics including Infectious Disease Consultants, Respiratory Consultants, Neurologists and Psychiatrists and additional multi-disciplinary staff to support the clinics, including Clinical Psychologists. The HSE wishes to advise that a clinical psychologist will be available at each of the six Long COVID sites through the MoC to enable each Long Covid clinic to access to a designated psychologist as part of their multi-disciplinary team, these posts are currently awaiting recruitment. Furthermore, the Psychologists will be embedded in the local Liaison Psychiatry team to ensure smooth referral pathways for those who need the input of Consultant Psychiatrist, and other team members, as well as Psychological input. Depression and anxiety have been well-described as part of Long Covid symptoms.

In some incidences the designated hospital sites are providing Long Covid and Post-Acute clinics on an interim basis while awaiting recruitment of full staffing as per the Model of Care. They have been established in response to local need and are leveraging existing resources and capacity. The HSE is now working with these sites to expand their resources to ensure they can meet the requirements of the Model of Care and what is required within a local context.



At present, people in the community who are concerned about persistent symptoms following Covid-19 should contact their GP in the first instance, who will be able to assess and signpost them towards the service most appropriate to their needs, including on-ward referral to a Post-Acute or Long Covid clinic if appropriate.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Seán McArt'.

Seán McArt
General Manager Primary Care
National Community Operations