



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

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

3rd June 2022

Deputy Verona Murphy,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 28735/22 - To ask the Minister for Health if his Department has made provision for the establishment of a central data base to hold information for long-Covid sufferers; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

- Verona Murphy

Dear Deputy Murphy,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Questions (PQ 28735/22), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Covid-19 is a new disease so information on it, its features, incidence and its course are still emerging. The natural history, clinical course and consequences of Covid-19 are still not completely understood. It is recognised that most people with Covid-19 return to baseline after acute infection, however a proportion will experience persistent and prolonged symptoms. There are many terms used to describe this post-acute sequelae, the most commonly used terms are Post Covid-19 Condition or Long Covid. Common symptoms include fatigue, shortness of breath and cognitive dysfunction which can have a significant impact on everyday functioning. Symptoms may be of new onset, following initial recovery from an acute Covid-19 episode, or may be persist from the initial illness. The condition usually presents with clusters of symptoms, often overlapping, which may change over time and can affect any system in the body.

The HSE recognises the need to provide follow up support and care for patients experiencing prolonged signs and symptoms of Covid-19. In response to this it has developed an Interim Model Of Care for Long Covid which 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.

The establishment of Post-acute and Long Covid clinics within each hospital is the initial priority for implementation of this Model. The Model of Care identifies the key personnel including consultants in the area of infectious disease, respiratory medicine and neurology and additional multidisciplinary staff required to support the work of these clinics.

In some incidences the designated hospital sites are providing both 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. It is also working with sites that do not already have access to designated clinics so that these can become operational.

At present published reports indicated that approximately 10-20% of COVID-19 patients experience lingering symptoms for weeks to months following COVID-19 infection. As part of its programme of work, the HSE planning an epidemiological survey which will be key to providing insight and understanding to the prevalence of Long Covid in the Irish Population and risk factors for developing Long Covid. It will also help to forecast future demand for services and will inform the direction of the Model of Care.

To further assist in estimating population need for Post-Acute and Long-Covid Clinics and resource requirements, the HSE is endeavouring to capture demand and activity levels of each clinic. The HSE is currently developing a minimum data set to capture this information. This will include the waiting list for each clinic, the number of patients referred to each clinic on a monthly basis and the number of patients who attended each clinic on a monthly basis. Collation of this data will inform current and future service provision and resource requirements.

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