



Oifig Ceannasaí Oibríochtaí,  
Oibríochtaí Pobail, Cúram Priomhúil

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4<sup>th</sup> April 2022

Deputy Bríd Smith,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

**PQ 14807/22 – To ask the Minister for Health the reason that the occupational therapy in the long-Covid clinic at St. James’s Hospital is being discontinued in April 2022 (details supplied); if he will provide funding to keep occupational therapy in the clinic; if he will further invest in a nationwide network of multidisciplinary long-Covid clinics to ensure that Ireland has the capacity and expertise to deal with this growing challenge; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

- Bríd Smith

Dear Deputy Smith,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Questions (PQ 14807/22), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

The HSE developed an interim Model of Care (Moc) for Long COVID in September 2021 to address the need to provide follow up care for patients with prolonged signs and symptoms of COVID-19. The aim of this MoC is to provide a national approach to the provision of this follow up care, by setting out a framework for how services should be designed and delivered. The MoC will build on existing service provision, in addition to establishing new services and supports across a number of different settings, including General Practice, Community Services, Acute and Integrated Care.

Within the acute setting, the Model further identifies the need for both Post-Acute and Long COVID clinics within each hospital group. The aim of a Post COVID-19 Assessment and Recovery Clinics is to ensure that patients who have recovered from the acute phase of COVID-19 are followed up in a timely and appropriate fashion taking into account factors such as disease severity, likelihood of long term respiratory symptoms and functional disability. As the recovery phase from COVID-19 may at times be unpredictable, clinical follow-up of this patient group should remain mindful of the possibility of additional, emerging issues. The Long COVID Clinics are a specialist service for patients with signs and symptoms that develop during or after an infection consistent with COVID-19, continue for more than 12 weeks and are not explained by an alternative diagnosis.

St James’s has been nominated for the establishment of a both a post-acute and long Covid clinic. St James’s has been notified by the HSE that funding is available for an occupational therapist to support the work of these clinics.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.



Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'TJ Dunford', is written over a horizontal line.

**TJ Dunford**  
Head of Operations - Primary Care  
Community Operations