



Health Protection Surveillance Centre

25-27 Middle Gardiner Street

Dublin, Ireland,

D01 A4A3

Ph +353 1 8765300

Fx +353 1 8561299

info@hpsc.ie

www.hpsc.ie

30th May 2022

Deputy Roisin Shortall
Dáil Éireann,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2

Re: PQ27155/22 To ask the Minister for Health the measures that he has taken to ensure that the State is prepared for the possibility of monkeypox cases; the role of the Incident Management Team; the steps that he has taken to ensure that vulnerable groups are aware of symptoms and treatment pathways; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Shortall

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

A multidisciplinary Incident Management Team (IMT) was established by the HSE when the international alert was first raised and commenced activities to prepare for cases in Ireland. The IMT is actively monitoring this evolving national and international situation. Clinical pathways and guidance for all aspects of the response including management of cases and contacts has been prepared and is available on the HPSC website at [Guidance - Health Protection Surveillance Centre \(hpsc.ie\)](http://www.hpsc.ie/Guidance-Health-Protection-Surveillance-Centre)

To assist in Ireland's response, monkeypox has been made a notifiable disease. This means that medical practitioners (and laboratories) are required to notify the local Medical Officer of Health/Director of Public Health of monkeypox cases in Ireland.

Anyone, regardless of their sexuality, can get monkeypox. However, many of the cases in this multi-country outbreak are in men who self-identify as gay, bisexual or other men who have sex with men (gbMSM). Many of these cases were diagnosed at sexual health clinics. The reason we are currently hearing more reports of cases of monkeypox in gbMSM communities may be because of positive health seeking behaviour in this community and increased awareness since this outbreak was alerted to the public and to healthcare workers across the world. Monkeypox rashes can resemble some sexually transmitted diseases, including herpes and syphilis, which may explain why these cases are being picked up at sexual health clinics.

MPOWER and Gay Health Network are represented on the multidisciplinary Monkeypox Incident Management Team and are actively engaging with their community to raise awareness about the potential for spread of monkeypox in their community. One key part of the response to date has been to facilitate a meeting of health experts with LGBT+ community leaders and organisers to share the most accurate and up-to-date information so that the community is best prepared for cases of monkeypox.

If you require any further information or clarification please do contact us.

Yours sincerely,



**Dr Derval Igoe,
Interim Director of HPSC,
25-27, Middle Gardiner St.,
Dublin 1.**

MRN: 009818