



Oifig Ceannasaí Oibríochtaí,
Oibríochtaí Pobail, Cúram Príomhúil

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2nd June 2022

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

PQ 27156/22 - To ask the Minister for Health the reason that the interim guidance plan for long-Covid, published September 2021, does not include neurological rehab and psychological supports and strategies; the data used to inform the decision to provide eight nutritionists as part of this plan; the rationale for the exclusion of the Mater Hospital, which is home to the original long-Covid clinic from the list of designated sites for long-Covid; 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 Questions (PQ 27156/22), 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.

The aim of Post-Acute COVID 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. Post-Acute Clinics will be led by respiratory consultants and will provide assessment and ongoing care for patients within twelve weeks of infection.

The following sites have been nominated as Post-Acute Covid clinics:

- Connolly Hospital Blanchardstown
- Mater University Hospital
- Tallaght University Hospital
- St. James University Hospital
- Cork University Hospital
- University Hospital Galway
- University Hospital Limerick
- Letterkenny University Hospital



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. Long Covid clinics will be led by infectious disease consultants.

The following hospital sites have been nominated as Long Covid clinics:

- St. James University Hospital
- Cork University Hospital
- University Hospital Galway
- University Hospital Limerick
- Beaumont University Hospital
- St. Vincent's University Hospital

The distribution of specialist centers for Long Covid Clinics was informed based on access and coverage of current resources and the regional areas selected ensures that each hospital group has access to both Post-Acute and Long COVID clinics and in this way promotes geographical equity. The regions include to Dublin, Cork, Galway, Eastern Seaboard (Donegal), West (Galway) Munster and Mid-West Region (Cork, Limerick). Development of clinics will be a dynamic process which adapts as we learn more from national and international research and practice.

Establishment of Post-Acute and Long Covid Clinics will be an initial priority for implementation of the MoC. The MoC identifies the resources and personnel required for each of these clinics including infectious disease consultant, respiratory consults, neurologists and additional multi-disciplinary staff to support the clinics, including clinical psychologists. Notification has recently been given to each of the sites so they can proceed with recruitment of the personnel associated with each of the clinics and this is now underway.

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. It is also working with sites that do not already have access to designated clinics so that these can become operational.

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 be 'F. O'Connell', written over a horizontal line.



TJ Dunford

Head of Operations - Primary Care
Community Operations