



Oifig Ceannasaí Oibríochtaí,
Oibríochtaí Pobail, Cúram Príomhúil

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15th November 2022

Deputy Richard O'Donoghue,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 55966/22 – To ask the Minister for Health the reason that the Government and the HSE have been extremely slow to provide adequate services and supports for patients suffering from long-Covid (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter.

- Richard O'Donoghue

Dear Deputy O'Donoghue,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (PQ 55966/22) which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

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 a Model of Care (MoC) for Long Covid which was finalised in September 2021. The aim of the MoC is to provide a national approach to the 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 MoC 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.

The following eight hospital 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 six 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 MoC identifies the resources and personnel required for each of these clinics including infectious disease consultants, respiratory consultants, neurologists and additional multi-disciplinary staff to support the clinics. The HSE worked closely with clinicians and senior management at each site to map existing resources against what was outlined within the Model, this identified gaps within existing service provision and informed what additional resources were required. It also ensured that the resources allocated were reflective of what was required within a local context. Recruitment is now underway and the HSE is continuing to engage with Strategic Workforce and Planning and with each of the individual sites to closely monitor recruitment. As this is an interim Model, the approach to implementation will be agile and flexible, as there may be a need to change and adapt services based on learnings from clinics, new and emerging evidence and current and future demand for service.

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 MoC. 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 MoC 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, patients with persistent symptoms following Covid-19 infection may be followed up by their GP or in hospital settings as clinically appropriate. 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 that reads 'Maeve Raeside'.

Maeve Raeside

General Manager Primary Care
National Community Operations