



Oifig Ceannasaí Oibríochtaí,
Oibríochtaí Pobail, Cúram Príomhúil

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22nd September 2022

Deputy John McGuinness,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 42084/22 – To ask the Minister for Health if he plans to examine the ongoing health issues caused by Covid and the response that is required to these issues by his Department and the HSE; if he has considered establishing long-Covid clinics to assist in the analysis of the after effects of Covid; if long-Covid will be acknowledged as a disability or in the case of the HSE as an occupational injury; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

- John McGuinness

Dear Deputy McGuinness,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (PQ 42084/22) 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 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 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 who have been hospitalized and or have persistent respiratory symptoms.

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

Establishment of Post-Acute and Long Covid Clinics will be an initial priority for implementation of the MoC. Recruitment of the personnel associated within each of the clinics has commenced. This includes consultants in the area of infectious diseases, respiratory medicine, neurology and additional multi-disciplinary staff to support the work of these clinics.

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, 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.

The HSE also wishes to advise that as part of the MoC, an epidemiological study is being planned and funded by the HSE. This is to provide insight to the estimated numbers of patients affected by Long COVID and associated risk factors for developing the condition. Primary Care operations could not comment on the acknowledgement of Long COVID as a disability or occupational injury.

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