



Oifig Ceannasaí Oibríochtaí,  
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**26<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

**Deputy Mairéad Farrell,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.**

**PQ 45544/22– To ask the Minister for Health the considerations that have been given to create a long-Covid clinic; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

**- Mairéad Farrell**

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Dear Deputy Farrell,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (PQ 45544/22) which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

The HSE launched its interim Model of Care (MoC) for Long COVID in September 2021. The aim of the MoC is to provide a national approach to the delivery of supports and services for patients living with prolonged symptoms of COVID-19. The MoC sets out a framework for how these supports and services should be designed and delivered with a focus on providing care across a number of different settings including acute hospitals, GP settings and community services.

A clinical subgroup was established by the office of the CCO and National Lead for integrated Care (NLIC) in 2020 to support the development of the MoC. This subgroup, consisting of leadership and representation from Primary Care, Older Persons, Respiratory Medicine, Chronic Disease, Infectious Disease, Mental Health and Neurology, led by NLIC. Other expert stakeholders involved in the group included Irish College of General Practitioners, Health and Social Care Professionals Office and Health Intelligence Unit.

The subgroup carried out extensive literature reviews and sought first hand clinical experience and expert opinion from consultants involved in the care of COVID-19 patients. This enabled the subgroup to scope out different structures and pathways for the delivery of post COVID care, based on the most up to date evidence available at the time. From this, a three pillar approach to a national post COVID service was proposed, spanning GP, community services and acute hospitals and the resultant MoC recommended the development of 8 Post-Acute COVID clinics, six Long COVID and a tertiary neuro-cognitive clinic, located at St James University Hospital

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 hospitalised 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.

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 read 'Seán McArt'.

**Seán McArt**



General Manager Primary Care  
National Community Operations