



Oifig Ceannasaí Oibríochtaí,
Oibríochtaí Pobail, Cúram Priomhúil

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24th April, 2023

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

PQ 16549/23 – To ask the Minister for Health if he will indicate his latest assessment of the extent of long-Covid, of the optimum services to meet the challenges for such patients, and of the extent to which services are now being made available on an adequate scale to patients; and if he has developed a process to monitor the progress of such patients to ensure that best international practice is applied here.

- Richard Bruton

Dear Deputy Bruton,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (PQ 16549/23) 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 (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 Interim MoC recommended the development of:

1. Eight Post-Acute COVID clinics
2. Six Long COVID clinics
3. A tertiary referral neurocognitive clinic for those with complex neuro cognitive/neuropsychological symptoms

To date, all six Long COVID clinics and the neurocognitive clinic have been established; six of eight Post-Acute COVID clinics outlined within the Model of Care have been established, with the outstanding sites leveraging existing resources and capacity to treat patients while dedicated posts are recruited. Care pathways have been developed outlining referral criteria for clinics and patient flow from their GP to specialist clinics. Latest guidance for GP's was published by the ICGP as an article in their 'Forum' March publication. This guidance included agreed referral criteria into Post-acute, Long COVID, and Neurology clinics, and the scope of services within these clinics.

The HSE is monitoring current demand for services and examining how it can model the numbers of people affected by Long COVID. An epidemiological survey is underway which will provide insight into the prevalence of Long COVID in the Irish Population and risk factors for developing Long COVID and inform



service development. Advanced reporting metrics on operational clinic activity levels are being collated individually by staff at each site. A uniform and national approach will be implemented in 2023.

Advice and guidance for living with longer term symptoms of long COVID is available via the HSE website; including tips on making everyday tasks easier, going back to work, and getting back to other activities. This site also signposts to other relevant resources patients may find useful.

The HSE recently commissioned an independent review by HIQA to evaluate and inform the provision and development of Long COVID services. Their findings showed that the HSE approach to Long COVID through the Model of Care is broadly consistent with those outlined internationally.

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