



Office of the National Director – Operational Performance and Integration  
HSE | Room 2.43, Dr. Steevens Hospital | Dublin D08 W2A8  
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Oifig an Stiúrthóra Náisiúnta – Feidhmíochta Oibriúcháin agus Comhtháthaithe  
FSS | Seomra 2.43, Oispidéal Dr. Steevens | Baile Átha Cliath D08 W2A8

27/02/2022

**PQ: 8752/23**

Deputy Thomas Gould,

Via email to [thomas.gould@oireachtas.ie](mailto:thomas.gould@oireachtas.ie) / CC: PQuestions@hse.ie

Dear Deputy Gould,

**To ask the Minister for Health the reason it has taken the HSE two years to inform people that their data was breached.**

An Garda Síochána returned a copy of data that was illegally accessed and copied to the HSE on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021 pursuant to a Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty. Since that time the HSE has reviewed thousands of documents illegally accessed and copied in the cyber-attack. The process took a number of months as the HSE had to examine, review, and cross-check each document in detail.

For each document that was illegally accessed and copied, the HSE needed to:

- review the document and extract information relevant to individuals
- take steps to identify the individuals
- verify their identity
- seek to ensure contact details were up to date

The HSE also had to establish a process to notify people in a secure and confidential manner.

The HSE carried out a full and detailed assessment of all the documents in accordance with the GDPR guidelines from the European Data Protection Board and the Data Protection Commission to identify the people they needed to write to.

On November 29 2022 the HSE started to contact people whose information was illegally accessed and copied during the cyber-attack on HSE systems. The HSE is writing to those who need to be notified under GDPR. Due to the numbers involved we began to notify approximately 100,000 people all over the country in a phased way and letters will continue to issue over the coming weeks. We anticipate we will have contacted everyone by April 2023.



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The purpose of our service for people being notified is to advise them of how this might affect them. We also aim to allow people, if they wish, to see a copy of their information that was compromised. Given the large number of people involved, the HSE has a portal available at [www.hse.ie/dataprotection](http://www.hse.ie/dataprotection) where people who receive a letter can make a request for a copy of their information. The quickest way to request their data is online but if people find it difficult to register online a postal process is also available and full details are on [www.hse.ie/dataprotection](http://www.hse.ie/dataprotection)

We sincerely regret the impact the cyber-attack has had on our health service, our patients and our teams nationwide. The HSE has taken a thorough approach in responding, from the initial response, to the lengthy period of data review, and now the notification process. We are very sorry that the cyber-attack occurred.

We trust this addresses your question.

Many thanks.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe Ryan', written in a cursive style.

Joe Ryan  
National Director Operational Performance and Integration  
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