



Oifig Ceannasaí Oibríochtaí,  
Oibríochtaí Pobail, Cúram Priomhúil

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27<sup>th</sup> January, 2023

Deputy Smith,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

**PQ 4017/23 – To ask the Minister for Health the services currently in place or that are planned to provide professional support to persons who are suffering with long-Covid and who are having difficulties with a return to work; and if he will make a statement on the matter**

**- Duncan Smith**

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Dear Deputy Smith,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (PQ 4017/23) which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

The HSE recognises the need to provide follow up care and support 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 to aid in returning them to a healthy lifestyle and activity levels prior to infection, including a return to work. 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 MoC recommends the development of eight Post-Acute and Six Long Covid clinics at nominated hospital sites. The aim of these clinics is to provide timely access to specialist assessment, diagnostics and multi-disciplinary rehabilitation intervention for patients who have been hospitalised and/or are experiencing persistent symptoms that have not responded to self-management and holistic interventions. The MoC recognises that the vast majority of patients will recover without specialist care. Therefore, there is a need to deliver as much re-enablement and rehabilitation as possible in the community, close to patients' home and at the lowest level of complexity. General Practitioners play a key role this regard, particularly in the initial management of patients with prolonged symptoms of Covid-19. This includes appropriate triaging of patients in the first incidence to exclude acute complications, providing holistic support, education and advice to help patients manage their symptoms and finally, sign-posting patients toward specialist Post-Acute and Long COVID clinics as required.

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 "Seán McArt".

**Seán McArt**  
General Manager Primary Care  
National Community Operations