



Príomhoifigeach Cliniciúil
Oifig an Phríomhoifigigh Cliniciúil

Ospidéal Dr Steevens, Lána Steevens
Baile Átha Cliath 8 , D08 W2A8

Chief Clinical Officer
Office of the Chief Clinical Officer

Dr Steevens Hospital, Steevens Lane
Dublin 8, D08 W2A8

www.hse.ie
[@hselive](https://twitter.com/hselive)

t 01 635 2000
e cco@hse.ie

BY EMAIL ONLY

Deputy Marc Ó Cathasaigh
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

9th June 2023

PQ26673/23- Deputy Marc Ó Cathasaigh-To ask the Minister for Health if his Department plans to expand capacity in respect to the impact of long-Covid on those impacted, either in terms of clinical research or the provision of services; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Ó Cathasaigh,

Thank you for your representation. The HSE launched its Interim Model of Care for Long COVID in September 2021.

The model has been implemented in a phased approach with the initial priority the establishment of Post-Acute and Long COVID Clinics within each hospital group to ensure a national service, in addition to a tertiary neuro-cognitive clinic located at St James's Hospital. The Long COVID clinics that are currently operational include St Vincent's University Hospital (SVUH), Beaumont Hospital and University Hospital Galway. The Post-Acute Covid clinics that are operational include University Hospital Galway, Mater University Hospital and Connolly Hospital Blanchardstown. Both Tallaght University Hospital and St James's Hospital are operating combined Post-Acute and Long COVID clinics. It is anticipated that the dedicated Long COVID and Post-Acute COVID clinic at Cork University Hospital will be launched in December 2022. The HSE is working with Letterkenny University Hospital and Limerick University Hospital to have a more definitive timeline around their anticipated launch dates. It is important to note, although recruitment is currently ongoing, those dedicated clinics where staff are already appointed are operational, albeit not fully staffed as per the Model of Care recommendations.

A national Long COVID neurology service is operating in St James's Hospital and can be accessed via referrals from Long COVID and Post-Acute clinics. A consultant neurologist, physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist and administration have been appointed with psychiatry and psychology positions being recruited.

The HSE commissioned a review by HIQA of the evidence regarding Long Covid, including models of care in other jurisdictions, this was published by HIQA in December 2022.



In addition the HSE requested HIQA to carry out a review of evidence and research to further inform the long COVID model of care. The Health Information and Quality Authority published its international review of the epidemiology of long COVID on the 31st of May 2023.

<https://www.hiqa.ie/reports-and-publications/health-technology-assessment/international-review-epidemiology-long-0>

HIQA's review included 51 primary research studies, which examined over 1.1 million participants, and four international registry documents. HIQA found that prevalence rates varied considerably across the studies. In studies based on self-reported data, estimates for the prevalence of long COVID in the general population ranged from 15% to 53%. Much of this variation may be due to differences in reporting methods and population demographics within studies. While prevalence estimates were highest in those with a history of severe COVID-19 illness, long COVID was reported across all populations and age groups.

Long COVID can result in sustained, significant reductions in quality of life and functioning in some individuals and a substantial burden on healthcare systems. Resourcing of existing services, as well as ensuring the availability of multi-disciplinary long COVID services, would help provide appropriate care to those experiencing long COVID.

No studies on the prevalence of long COVID in Ireland were identified. HIQA has advised that further research on long COVID in Ireland may better inform healthcare resourcing. As a result of this review the HSE will be reviewing the Interim Model of Care for Long COVID.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sharon Hayden', written over a thin horizontal line.

Sharon Hayden
General Manager
Office of the Chief Clinical Officer