



Príomhoifigeach Cliniciúil  
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## BY EMAIL ONLY

Deputy Neasa Hourigan  
Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2

25<sup>th</sup> May 2023

**PQ22617/23- Deputy Neasa Hourigan- To ask the Minister for Health his plans to provide for the recognition of long-Covid in children; if his Department has reviewed best practice from other jurisdictions such as the UK NHS's setting-up of specialist long-COVID services for children and young people; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

**PQ22618/23- Deputy Neasa Hourigan- To ask the Minister for Health his plans to integrate services for children into the HSE's long-Covid services framework; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Hourigan,

Thank you for your representation. The HSE launched its Interim Model of Care for Long COVID in September 2021. This clinical Model of Care was developed by a clinical subgroup established by the Office of Chief Clinical Officer (CCO) and National Lead for Integrated Care in 2020, consisting of leadership and representatives from the areas of infectious disease, respiratory medicine, neurology, older persons and chronic disease. Other expert stakeholders involved in the group included Irish College of General Practitioners, Health and Social Care Professionals Office, Health Intelligence Unit and representatives from primary care.

There is no evidence internationally that advocates for the requirement of a specialist Long COVID clinic for children, access to services should be via general practice or referral to a Consultant General Paediatrician.

The model is being 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.

Finally, 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. The HSE are continuing to review new evidence and research in relation to Long COVID in children.

I hope this provides you with assistance.

Yours sincerely

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

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Sharon Hayden  
General Manager  
Office of the Chief Clinical Officer