



Oifig Ceannasaí Oibríochtaí,
Oibríochtaí Pobail, Cúram Priomhúil

Seomra 243, Ospidéal Dr Steevens,
Lána Steevens, Baile Átha Cliath 8.
D08 W2A8.

Office of the Head of Operations,
Community Operations - Primary Care

Rm 243, Dr Steevens Hospital,
Steevens Lane, Dublin 8. D08 W2A8.

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

T: 01 6352209/2682
E: community.primarycare@hse.ie

2nd June 2022

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 26993/22 - To ask the Minister for Health the steps that are being taken to support those suffering from long-Covid symptoms including extreme fatigue, brain-fog, neurological symptoms, severe nerve pain, severe itching, epilepsy and gastric issues; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

- Éamon Ó Cuív

Dear Deputy Ó Cuív,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Questions (PQ 26993/22), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Covid-19 is a new disease so information on it, its features, incidence and its course are still emerging. The natural history, clinical course and consequences of Covid-19 are still not completely understood. It is recognised that most people with Covid-19 return to baseline after acute infection, however a proportion will experience persistent and prolonged symptoms. There are many terms used to describe this post-acute sequelae, the most commonly used terms are Post Covid-19 Condition or Long Covid. Common symptoms include fatigue, shortness of breath and cognitive dysfunction which can have a significant impact on everyday functioning. Symptoms may be of new onset, following initial recovery from an acute Covid-19 episode, or may be persistent from the initial illness. The condition usually presents with clusters of symptoms, often overlapping, which may change over time and can affect any system in the body.

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 for Long Covid which was finalised in September 2021. The aim of the MoC is to provide a national approach to 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 Model of Care recommended the development of eight Post-Acute Clinics and six Long Covid clinics.

The aim of Post-Acute COVID clinics is to ensure that patients who have recovered from the acute phase of COVID-19 are followed up in a timely and appropriate fashion taking into account factors such as disease severity, likelihood of long term respiratory symptoms and functional disability. Post-Acute Clinics will be led by respiratory consultants and will provide assessment and ongoing care for patients within twelve weeks of infection.

The following sites have been nominated as Post-Acute Covid clinics:

- Connolly Hospital Blanchardstown



- Mater University Hospital
- Tallaght University Hospital
- St. James University Hospital
- Cork University Hospital
- University Hospital Galway
- University Hospital Limerick
- Letterkenny University Hospital

Long COVID Clinics are a specialist service for patients with signs and symptoms that develop during or after an infection consistent with COVID-19, continue for more than 12 weeks and are not explained by an alternative diagnosis. Long Covid clinics will be led by infectious disease consultants.

The following hospital sites have been nominated as Long Covid clinics:

- St. James University Hospital
- Cork University Hospital
- University Hospital Galway
- University Hospital Limerick
- Beaumont University Hospital
- St. Vincent's University Hospital

Establishment of Post-Acute and Long Covid Clinics will be an initial priority for implementation of the MoC. Recruitment of the personnel associated within each of the clinics has commenced. This includes consultants in the area of infectious diseases, respiratory medicine, neurology and additional multi-disciplinary staff to support the work of these clinics

In some incidences the designated hospital sites are providing Long Covid and Post-Acute clinics on an interim basis while awaiting recruitment of full staffing as per the Model of Care. They have been established in response to local need and are leveraging existing resources and capacity. The HSE is now working with these sites to expand their resources to ensure they can meet the requirements of the Model of Care and what is required within a local context. It is also working with sites that do not already have access to designated clinics so that these can become operational.

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, appearing to be a stylized 'F' or similar character, located at the bottom of the page.



TJ Dunford

Head of Operations - Primary Care
Community Operations