



5th April 2024

Deputy Róisín Shortall, TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

PQ 11366/24

To ask the Minister for Health the criteria for discharging patients from long-Covid and post-acute clinics; if people can discharge themselves; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Shortall,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in relation to the above parliamentary question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have consulted with the National Clinical Programme (NCP) for Infectious Diseases on your question and have been informed that the following outlines the position.

The HSE launched its Interim Model of Care for Long Covid in September 2021. Work immediately began on the implementation of recommendations from the model, to allow for provision of supports and services for those experiencing prolonged symptoms of Covid-19. The model of care recommended the establishment of six Long Covid clinics across the country representing each hospital group, with appropriate staffing support. All Long Covid clinics are now established and receiving patients.

When a patient is seen at a Long Covid Clinic, a range of investigations and examinations are carried out, with further management based on these results. Examples of such further management include self-management, referral to a specialist service or multidisciplinary team (MDT) advice and rehabilitation support.

A patient can be discharged from the clinic if there is progressive clinical improvement and they can continue with self-management strategies. They can also be discharged if they have fully recovered or have an alternative diagnosis.

Some patients with long-standing symptoms may be offered virtual follow-ups, pending new therapeutic options.

People always have the right to self-discharge from a clinic. A patient can self-discharge if they wish to be withdrawn from the service, or if they repeatedly are unable to/fail to attend scheduled appointments.

I trust this information is of assistance to you, but should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Anne Horgan
General Manager