



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,
31-33 Sráid Chaitríona, Luimneach.

Office of the Head of Operations,
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29th January 2021

Deputy Róisín Shortall,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House, Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: roisin.shortall@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Shortall,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the following parliamentary question, which was submitted to this department for response.

PQ 2546/21

To ask the Minister for Health when services for persons with disabilities will resume; the timeline his Department is working towards; if staff in these services have returned to their original roles following redeployment; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

HSE Response

Effective redeployment of health service employees was a core element of the response in the HSE to COVID-19. Hospital groups and Community Health Organisations (CHOs) temporarily redeployed staff to support their business continuity plans, emerging services developing in direct response to COVID 19, and in response to the health and availability of staff in their own organisations.

In the same way corporate and national services, together with Tusla, also made staff available to support the overall HSE effort during this time.

The HSE's National HR-Strategic Workforce Planning and Intelligence Unit collects information regarding the redeployment of some grades of staff. Many grades and categories of staff were redeployed and some continue to be redeployed to other services such as contact tracing and testing.

In relation to Disability Day Services, locations reopened in August 2020 and at that time there was still a significant number of day service staff redeployed. Early in October 2020, an additional €7.5m funding was received from DOH to fund 605 posts to enable day service staff to return to day service locations and still maintain the continuity of residential services.

In November 2020 it was confirmed that the funding allocated for these 605 posts would continue for 2021.

Recruitment is being advanced in regard to these posts and it is expected that almost 200 of these posts will have been filled by end of December 2020 with the remaining posts due to be filled in the first quarter of 2021. The positive impact of these posts is already evident with an increase in the quantum of service being provided to existing day service users. At the end of September, service users were in receipt of in excess of 40% of their original service and by end of November this had increased to 53%. It is anticipated that when all 605 posts are filled, services will have resumed to in excess of 60%.

In respect of the provision of Disability Services and in the context of the Governments Resilience & Recovery Framework (2020 – 2021), the HSE regards the provision of disability services as essential to maintaining a response to people with a disability.

All disability services must follow public health guidance in this area, including the prevention and management of covid related infection. The HSE and its funded disability partners will continue to provide supports and services in line with public health guidance and direction and having regard to the availability of staffing resources.

Reference is drawn to the following HSE weblink which provides updates and guidance for disability service providers, including 'service resumption planning guidance'.

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partner-resources/>

As the country is currently under level 5 restrictions due to the pandemic, this web link also contains the most recent information "*Guidance measures for Disability Services in the context of current high levels of Covid 19 transmission rates in the community*", effective from 5th January 2021.

Attention is also drawn to the following important web links which provide up to date information resources in respect of COVID-19: www.hspc.ie

<https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/c36c85-covid-19-coronavirus/>

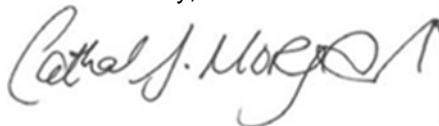
Additional funding;

The HSE and disability service providers recognise the critical need and importance of disability supports for people and their families. The impact of COVID-19 on people's lives has and continues to be very significant. Our collective aim is to restore services and ensure continuity of services in a safe way and in line with the very significant investment made by the State and funded agencies.

In this context, we welcome the recent announcements from the Government of additional funding for Disability Services:

- An additional €100 million secured for Disability Services in the recent budget. The specific breakdown of this investment will be discussed as part of the normal service planning process and will be detailed in the National Service Plan. However, the HSE anticipates that significant funding will be allocated for the development of additional Services.
- €12.5 million is being made available to support the resumption of day services and enhanced home support services for disability service users.
- €20 million in one-off grants will be provided to reform disability services, build the capacity of disability organisations and to improve the quality of life of those who rely on these services.
- €7.8 million has been allocated by Sláintecare to facilitate the HSE and its funded service providers to address the overdue Assessments of Need.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Cathal Morgan,
Head of Operations - Disability Services,
Community Operations