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**25/04/2019**

**Deputy Niamh Smyth,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.**

**PQ 16870/19**

To ask the Minister for Health if acceptance of the free travel pass on all LocalLink services will be granted in view of HSE charges of €4 a day being introduced on elderly and disability service users accessing public transport to and from day services; if his attention has been drawn to the fact that these charges were introduced by the HSE in recent days; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

-Niamh Smyth

Dear Deputy Niamh Smyth,

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

The HSE welcomes the partnership with Local Rural Transport Companies (Local Link) to further develop and enhance the transport service currently available to Day Service Clients across Community Health Care Organisation Area 1 (Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Monaghan & Sligo).

The provision of transport for clients accessing HSE Day Services across Older Persons, Disability and Mental Health Services is a particular challenge across the five counties where public transport is limited. The HSE does not have a statutory requirement to provide transport, however it is recognised that many people could not access services without HSE support. Currently the HSE contribute approximately 90% of total transport operating costs to enable clients to access day services across CHO 1 with the remainder being paid by passengers.

Due to increasing transport costs and to enable the continued delivery of these essential services it is necessary to introduce a standard €4 daily charge for all CHO 1 service users from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019. This charge will contribute to overall improvements in service delivery including increased number of routes, shorter journey times and improvement in overall quality of vehicles used.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,



David Walsh,  
National Director,  
Community Operations