



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,  
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,  
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8<sup>th</sup> March 2019

Deputy Noel Rock,  
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Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.  
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Dear Deputy Rock,

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 9434/19**

*To ask the Minister for Health his plans to create a community transport service for those with disabilities needing to attend services which are a substantial distance from their home; and if he will make a statement on the matter*

#### **HSE Response**

The provision of transport services is not part of core services within disability services. As a general rule public transport should be used in all circumstances where it is an option. This is in keeping with the principle of mainstreaming with a clear focus on ensuring persons with a disability have access to the normal range of services and participate in community life as far as possible. It must be noted that in general, day service users are in receipt of disability allowance and are automatically entitled to the Free Travel Pass, so there should be no additional cost burden at an individual level.

With regard to day service needs, all new service locations under development are located as close as possible to where people reside so as to reduce the travel time for each person and enable them to be more connected with their own local community.

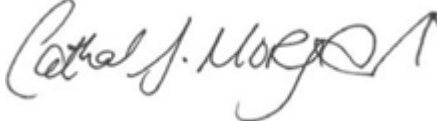
Funding is not provided for the transportation of young people to and from day services. However when all other options are exhausted and a person cannot avail of a day service because they do not have transport to attend, the service provider is advised to use some of the service money to cover the transport costs – this usually results in the provision of a reduced quantum of service .

The HSE has liaised with the National Transport Authority and disability service providers to explore ways in which the Authority's services could assist people with disabilities. The National Transport Authority has a total of 17 Transport co-ordinating units called Local Link which provide safe secure and reliable Public Transport services in local and rural areas of Ireland through a combination of scheduled Public Transport services and door to door services.

The HSE is also working with the National Transport Authority to carry out a national survey of existing transport provision within disability services, to establish the extent of transport provision available within disability services, the current cost of the provision, identify the gaps in provision and make

recommendations for better use of existing resources. The HSE was successful in securing Dormant Account Monies to fund this project which will map all Disability transport routes nationally. A number of meetings were held with the Department of Transport, NTA and Jacobs (the company secured by the NTA to carry out the project work). A Presentation was made by the NTA and Jacobs to the National Consultative Forum members. Following on from this, meetings have been arranged with the three Umbrella Organisations (National Federation of Voluntary Bodies, Inclusion Ireland and the Disability Federation of Ireland) to present an overview of the project. In addition, a national meeting will be held in the midlands in April to train the staff to complete the required documentation. Jacobs are currently working on the documentation for distribution. The HSE will support the project through the provision of administrative backup. The timeline for the completion of this project is the end of December 2019.

Yours sincerely,



**Dr. Cathal Morgan,  
Head of Operations,  
Disability Services, Social Care Division**