



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

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11th July 2019

Deputy Louise O'Reilly,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
e-mail: louise.oreilly@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy O'Reilly,

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 27269/19

To ask the Minister for Health the estimated cost of allocating the remainder of the capital expenditure identified as necessary by the HSE to complete the process of de-congregation.

HSE Response

The Disability Capital Programme that commenced in 2016 provides an allocation of €100million spread over a number of years for the provision of housing to support people transitioning from the congregated settings. It must be noted that the Disability Capital Programme is managed by the HSE Disability and Estates Oversight Group and is targeted at those with higher dependency levels that require significantly higher level of care and support. However it is also recognised that Housing Authorities and Approved Housing Bodies will have to plan for the increasing numbers of people with Disabilities who will seek state support through the social housing system as they are entitled to do so.

To date €50.3 million has been allocated which is supporting the development of 105 homes for 374 people. The priority to date for the HSE Capital programme has been to supply housing that supports the transition of residents from the priority congregated settings. The remaining €50 million of the HSE disability capital programme will also be allocated to support the closure of the priority sites. An indicative plan is in place for this and has been widely circulated to enable the services to plan ahead. It is estimated that in the region of 825 people will be supported to decongregate from the €100million provided.

In line with the Transforming Lives reform agenda, people are being supported to choose where and with whom they live in the community. As a result, to date the capital funding has been utilised flexibly to optimise value for money and ensure that the housing meets people's needs. This has included purchasing and adapting homes, new builds and large scale refurbishments as well as investing some capital funds in the upgrade of long term private rental properties and in collaborative projects with the local authorities and voluntary housing sector. The current average capital cost for the HSE owned projects is €136,685 per person based on the projects currently underway.

Some people with disabilities moving from the congregated settings are also being supported to access housing through other options including, local authority housing, housing supplied by approved housing bodies, and private rental arrangements with the support of housing assistance payments etc. Please see piece on National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability below.

It is estimated that on completion of all the HSE projects that can be funded from the €100million by 2022, and the continued use of the other housing options noted above, there will still be approximately 1,400 people living in congregated settings who still require homes in the community.

In a recent review of the housing need of those that remain in the congregated settings, the service providers indicated that at least 622 of these people could have their housing need met through the Capital Assistance Scheme. However, based on the high level of disability and support needs of the people that remain in congregated settings, it is reasonable to assume that the housing required to enable these people to transition into the community and live well, will require some adaptation and that this will be more costly than standard family homes.

A recent project completed by a local authority for four people with a disability gave a build cost of €360,000 (excluding site costs, fees and equipping or furnishing). Similar projects completed by the HSE average €503,000 which takes into account all fees and “fit-out” to turn key standard.

It is important to highlight that the current HSE Capital investment programme is providing good quality housing for the people moving from the congregated settings which is designed in line with universal design principles. Going forward this will serve not only the residents moving now but will ensure that we are building housing capacity, which will meet the need of others in the future.

At the end of the current HSE capital programme in 2022, there will still be a large population in congregated settings. On this basis, the HSE Estates Department have indicated that a second tranche of €100million will be required to develop appropriate community housing for all those who still remain in congregated settings.

It is also important to note that there are variables that will influence which agencies will be best placed to deliver the quantum and the type of housing that will be needed. Effective collaboration between the HSE, Department of Housing, Local Authorities and voluntary housing sector will be needed to achieve value for money and ensure appropriate homes come on stream in a timely manner. Factors which must be considered include:

- Promote and drive uptake of CAS funding for suitable homes.
- The enactment of the Assisted Decision Making legislation, in terms of people with an intellectual disability holding a tenancy.
- The resident population is ageing which can bring about significant changes in support needs and the need for adaptations.
- There is also clear evidence from several of the larger sites who are in the final stages of the decongregation process, that as the campus’ empty, the residents that remain often require more individualised housing arrangements, for example -living alone or in smaller groups.
- Many of the residents are not yet fully engaged in planning their move. In order to manage expectations, these discussions must be managed carefully and at the appropriate time. Providers often prefer to ensure they have sufficient resources to support and enable the move before starting this process.

National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability

The provision of housing for people with disabilities is also a key priority for the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government and for housing authorities. Working with a range of stakeholders, the Department is committed to achieving positive change for people with disabilities through the National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability (NHSPWD).

The aim of this Strategy, which was jointly published with the Department of Health, is to facilitate access for people with disabilities to the appropriate range of housing and related support services. A key objective is also to ensure that services are delivered in an integrated and sustainable manner, which promotes equality of opportunity, individual choice and independent living.

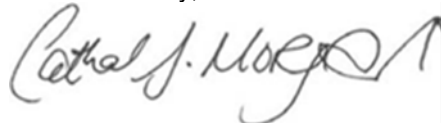
The Strategy was developed as part of a coherent framework, in conjunction with A Vision for Change, the strategy document which set out the direction for Mental Health services, the proposals of the report on the Working Group on Congregated Settings and the ongoing review of disability services, to support people with disabilities in community based living with maximum independence and choice.

In this context, one of the most important aims of the Strategy is to foster effective inter-agency cooperation. Subsequent to the original publication of the Strategy, a National Implementation Framework was developed and a partnership approach to implementation has been adopted between the two Departments, the Housing Agency, local authorities and disability stakeholders and we are working as a team to achieve the aims of the Strategy.

From a strategic perspective, one of the most significant achievements of the Strategy is the establishment of the Housing and Disability Steering Groups (HDSGs) in each local authority area who have prepared their own localised strategic plans for delivering housing in their areas for people with disabilities.

The delivery of housing for people with disabilities by local authorities and approved housing bodies is funded in a number of ways. Housing may be provided directly through the local authority capital programme, the long-term leasing programme or by way of the Capital Assistance Scheme and the Capital Advance Leasing Facility, programmes delivered through the Approved Housing Body sector. In particular, the Capital Assistance Scheme ('CAS') is directly targeted at providing accommodation for specific categories of need, including disability. €80.65 million was provided for dwellings under the CAS Scheme 2018, with a budget allocation of €94.87 million in 2019. There is also further specific funding available to local authorities of €15.075 million for the Disabled Persons Grant Scheme and the Improvement Works in Lieu of Local Authority Housing Scheme, an increase of over €1 million from 2018 levels.

Yours sincerely,



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