



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,
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29th December 2020

Deputy Brendan Smith,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
e-mail: brendan.smith@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Smith,

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 43994/20

To ask the Minister for Health if there will be no costs on persons with a disability availing of transport to day services or training centres in any region; 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 developments to meet the day service needs of school leavers each year, 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 people to and from services. However when all other options are exhausted and a person cannot avail of a 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.

Adult day service users require appropriate transport options to enable them to attend their day service. Unfortunately, public transport options are not available to the majority of service users throughout the country and transport is not included in the Department of Health's funding for adult disability day services. The HSE, service providers and service users' families work together to find viable transport solutions. Many families transport their family member to and from the service each day. Some service providers have built up their own transport fleet that provides the necessary transport to their service users. Third party contracted transport which may require a contribution from

the service users has been negotiated in many areas. For example, the contracts negotiated with Local Link in CHO 1 is supplemented by a contribution from each transport user.

With regard to the transport for a person to attend day services, and bearing in mind that the provision of transport services is not part of core services within disability services, attention is drawn to the following guidance available at:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partner-resources/guidance-to-support-the-framework-for-resumption-of-adult-disability-day-services.pdf>

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.
- €10 million is being made available to support the resumption of day services and enhanced home support services for disability service users. The €10 million funding is being drawn down from the National Action Plan on COVID-19 - €7.5 million will increase the level of day service provision and €2.5 million will provide intensive support packages for children and young people with complex/high support needs.
- €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.

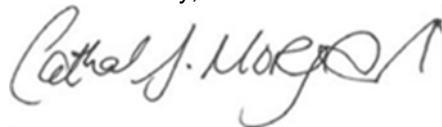
Reference is drawn to the following HSE weblink which provides updates and guidance for disability service providers, including 'service resumption planning guidance':

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

Attention is also drawn to the following important web links which provides up to date information resources in respect of covid: www.hspc.ie

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

Yours sincerely,



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