



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,  
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,  
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14<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Deputy Mattie McGrath  
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Dear Deputy McGrath,

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 14321/20**

*To ask the Minister for Health when full disability services will resume in County Tipperary for both adult and child disability services; the reason for the delay; the services that have resumed; the supports in place for those with special needs that are regressing as a result of closure of all services; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

#### **HSE Response**

In preparing for and responding to COVID-19 and to fully align with Public Health guidance as recommended via the NPHET, the HSE and its partner service providers put in place a range of measures, which included the prioritisation of vital residential and home support services whilst curtailing or closing certain services such as day services, respite services, and certain clinical supports in order to; a) prioritise essential public health services at CHO level and b) ensure continued delivery of the referenced residential and home supports provision.

in the absence of regular access to some service and supports, CHOs and service providers tried to maintain services that can be delivered safely; providing outreach and telecare solutions, using technology where possible; and using creative and innovative models of care to support service users, both adults and children.

Additionally, I can also clarify that the HSE is recommencing work in relation to the setting up of Childrens Disability Networks with our agency partners, with Network Managers currently being appointed.

Under the governance of the HSEs National Integrated Operations Hub chaired by the COO and work relating to vulnerable people, Disability Operations has a team in place with the responsibility for providing supports and capacity building training for the sector. To date, a range of guidance material has been developed to support people with disabilities, families and staff including:

- Alternative Models of Care (Non-Residential)
- Frequently Asked Questions for People with Disabilities and Carers.
- Streamlined Health Passport for people with disabilities who are admitted to hospital
- Guidance on Use of PPE in Disability Services



Building a Better Health Service

CARE COMPASSION TRUST LEARNING

- Guidance for supporting adults in a community residence/at home
- Guidance of supporting children in a community residence/at home
- Support coordination in a pandemic; practical checklist to avoid stressors for service users

For the full list of Guidance/Advice documentation, see the below web link which is the central repository for disability specific guidance material during the COVID-19 emergency.

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

## Roadmap for Reopening

Processes are underway in order to plan for the reintroduction of non-Covid services. In that regard the HSE has now developed a number of important guidance documents to assist disability services. These are now also available on the above website and are as follows:

1. Framework for Resumption of Adult Day Services;
2. Reshaping Disability Services From 2020 & Beyond

It is important to note that the above guidance is interim and subject to change in line with the overall management of the Covid-19 pandemic and in accordance with contemporary Public Health Guidance;

County Tipperary is under the remit of CHO 3 and CHO 5. CHOs (including CHO 3 and CHO 5) and S38/39 agencies continue to work together at a regional level in order to plan and co-ordinate efforts.

The HSE continues to plan the re-establishment of vital non-covid supports and services including therapy services. This includes very careful and detailed work on the part of the Disability Sector with national guidance and will result in directing how all funded agencies can deliver services on a medium to long-term basis. Plans have to comply with guidance as set out by the National Public Health Emergency Team as well as Public Health specialists in the HSE.

In respect of Children's Disability Services, a national implementation group is being established to support the reform of these services as envisaged in PDS1 and through the establishment of 'Networks' (CDNs) by year end. This remains a key a priority commitment for the HSE and its Lead Agency Partners;

In addition the Disability Sector is re-establishing a number of structures including the National Consultative Forum as well as other operational structures that will co-ordinate and support the sector as we continue to navigate this pandemic and make every effort to deliver supports and services in line with Public Health Guidance.

## Resumption of Day Services

The HSE has been planning for the resumption of adult disability day services since the middle of May. A group representative of families, service providers and other relevant stakeholders was convened and tasked with the development of a Resumption Plan. On May 31<sup>st</sup> the Framework for the Resumption of Adult Disability Day Services was published and the guidance to support this framework was published on July 8<sup>th</sup>.

Both documents are available on [www.hse.ie/newdirections](http://www.hse.ie/newdirections).

It is planned that disability day services for adults will resume on a gradual basis during the month of August.

When services resume they will be building on the significant supports that have been provided to day service recipients during COVID 19. In that regard the following service information relates:-

Of the approximately **19,000 adults** in receipt of day service supports the following supports have been provided during COVID 19:

- Almost **5,000** of these adults have received a full 24/7 service which includes individualised supports in line with their dreams and wishes.

- A **further 4,000 adults** continue to receive face to face supports albeit at a reduced level (Covid safety)
- Of the **1,000 day service locations** nationally, HSE funded day services continued to provide supports at almost **300** locations to support people who were in a priority category with families under significant pressure.

Additionally, the HSE is planning to deliver summer programme for children and young people with complex disability needs.

During COVID 19, much has been learned about new ways of providing supports due to the restrictions imposed as a consequence of the pandemic and when services resume in August this new learning will also apply.

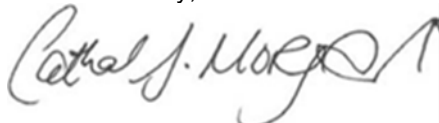
The guidance developed to support the resumption of adult day services has had to take account of social distancing rules which will mean that there will be a reduced number of people in each service location. However, the HSE is committed to maximising the support that can be provided within these restrictions. The focus will be very much on the Personal Plan for each individual and the provision of supports to enable people to achieve their goals. The Personal Plan will also have to take account of family circumstances and the stress and pressure experienced by some parents and carers over the last number of months.

Over the coming weeks the focus of work to support the resumption of adult disability day services will be as follows:-

- Providers will plan to resume day services which will see the opening up of locations from August.
- Providers are required to liaise with people with disabilities and their families to discuss how best to meet their support needs in the context of public health guidance.
- People will return to services but at reduced hours per week; however, the HSE and service providers will keep in review this measure and as public health guidance evolves, our capacity to provide supports will adapt accordingly.
- For some people with disabilities, it may be more appropriate to provide supports in their own home.
- Each person's personal plan will guide the package of supports that they will receive.
- Where families are experiencing significant challenges or where there is an emergency, the HSE and providers will work positively to assist and support those families to the greatest possible extent.
- Providers are exploring options such as the use of other community facilities to augment capacity.
- People that have left school and require a day service will be introduced to a new service during September and it is important to note that ring-fenced resources have been provided to facilitate same as part of the HSE's National Service Plan (2020).

As services resume, a critical issue will be the requirement to ensure strict infection control to ensure that service users, their families and the staff that support them are kept safe and infection free.

Yours sincerely,



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