



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,
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30th July 2020

Deputy Sean Sherlock,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: sean.sherlock@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Sherlock,

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 120460/20

To ask the Minister for Health the time frame for measures to assist young disabled persons currently housed in residential care homes in relocating to suitable accommodation with the necessary personal support services; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

HSE Response

The health service provides Specialist Disability services to enable each individual with a disability to achieve his or her full potential and maximise independence, including living as independently as possible. Services are provided in a variety of community and residential settings in partnership with service users, their families and carers and a range of statutory, non-statutory, voluntary and community groups. These services are not demand led and are provided within the available budget. Although most families would prefer to be able to care for their loved ones at home, hospital/nursing home care is at times necessary and it forms part of the continuum of care.

In addressing the needs of adults with a disability the full range of community services available are tailored to meet the needs of the individual. The health service works with local authorities, the Department of Education and Skills and other public services as well as the voluntary sector in seeking to tailor the services to best fit the needs of the individual.

The HSE is aware that many people with disabilities reside in Nursing Homes, which are appropriate to their elder care / medical needs. In some cases people may have enhanced supports in relation to their disability support needs. The Nursing Home sector is used in developing options to meet the needs of some adults with a disability where no other alternatives are possible. We need to regularly review these individuals to see if through their care plan a more appropriate option might be available. In the longer term the policy is to develop a more tailored service suitable to meet the needs of these service users.

The HSE, working with the Community Healthcare Organisations, makes every effort to accommodate people's wishes and support them to move to the home of their choice with support based on assessed need. However, and in accordance with the HSE'S National Service Plan, resources are finite and regrettably, people will sometimes have to wait a period of time before their wish can be facilitated.



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It is also important to note that while a significant number of people being cared for in this setting do have a disability, there are also a number of people who have complex medical and social care needs that require intensive nursing and medical care that cannot be provided in a home setting or by family members. This might include people who have conditions such as Parkinson's or early onset dementia. People with these complex care requirements are cared for appropriately in these settings.

This issue concerning people under 65 years of age in Nursing Homes has been raised on numerous occasions at the Disability National Consultative Forum and as a consequence some research was carried out by the Disability Federation of Ireland highlighting the issues. See link below:

www.disability-federation.ie/download/pdf/dfi_rr_2018_web.pdf

However, there is no specific ring fenced funding available to address this issue at this time.

Programme for Government (PfG)

The new Programme for Government sets out on pages 89 to 92 the aims of the new Government concerning people with disabilities. Part of it's plan is to: *"Reduce and provide a pathway to eliminate the practice of accommodating young people with serious disabilities in nursing homes"*.

Moreover, on pages 57 to 59, the PfG sets out the aims of the new Government concerning older people. It plans to establish a Commission on Care taking into account the impact COVID-19 has had on older people. The commission will examine care and supports for older people and will examine alternatives to meet the diverse needs of older citizens. Among other measures it intends to: *"Introduce a statutory scheme to support people to live in their own homes which will provide equitable access to high quality, regulated home care"*.

Yours sincerely,



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