



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,
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24th June 2020

Deputy Robert Troy,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: robert.troy@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Troy,

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 10678/20

To ask the Minister for Health the status of the redeployment of SNAs (details supplied); if redeployment is going ahead; if so, the areas to which persons will be redeployed; and if there will be limitations regarding potential health issues.

Details Supplied: SNA's are being kept in the dark, they are repeatedly being asked to send in Garda Vetting from but then hearing nothing further

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.

I should note that in the absence of regular access to some service and supports, CHOs and service providers have 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.

As part of our planned COVID-19 related measures, the HSE is hoping to implement the temporary reassignment of Special Needs Assistants to work with healthcare staff in reaching our most vulnerable children with disabilities and their families, as part of our effort to increase the availability of supports.

The Garda Vetting of Special Needs Assistants has been prioritised. There was a delay in the process at the end of April when an issue arose regarding the need for the role to be more detailed with regard to the remote working of applicants.

At the end of May 2020 processing of Garda Vetting Applications of SNA's was at over 1,000 Garda vetting applications completed each week. The HSE with the assistance of the National Garda Vetting Bureau had prioritised COVID related Garda Vetting applications and had completed Garda vetting on 5,763 SNA's.



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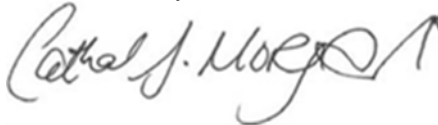
There were 2,000 applications being processing and 2,343 individuals that cannot proceed until they have completed the initial phase of the process.

By the 25th June 2020 the number of SNA's that have been Garda Vetted now stands at 7,377.

With regard to the query concerning limitations regarding potential health issues, the redeployment of SNAs is a voluntary scheme under the Government sponsored 'health led summer programme' for children with complex disability needs and SNAs will be accommodated regarding their preferences: i.e; (i) centre based (ii) home based or (iii) both options.

A Standard Operating Procedure (Version 2) has been developed to provide support and guidance to Chief Officers and Service Managers and an associated FAQ provides assurance, advice and answers to questions that SNAs may have, including questions concerning their own health and that of their family.

Yours sincerely,



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