



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,
31-33 Sráid Chaitríona, Luimneach.

Office of the Head of Operations,
Disability Services/Social Care Division,
31-33 Catherine Street, Limerick.

T: 00353 (0) 61 483369

Suíomh Gréasáin/Website: <http://www.hse.ie>

25th May 2020

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: eamon.ocuiv@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Ó Cuív,

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 4629/20

To ask the Minister for Health his plans to ensure adequate care for persons with an intellectual disability that may be impacted by Covid-19 either directly or indirectly in view of their vulnerability to change; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

HSE Response

The HSE and its partner service providers are endeavouring to maintain essential support services during this unprecedented public health emergency. HSE Community Healthcare Organisations (CHOs) are continuing to proactively engage with disability service providers to ensure that appropriate contingency arrangements are made so that the necessary supports are put in place for persons with disabilities and their families.

The HSE has several weekly telecons with a number of key stakeholders representing the interest of service users and their families as well as provider organisations in identifying and addressing specific challenges for people with disabilities and their families during COVID-19. This includes working together to identify and respond to challenges; guidance and advice development; and resolution of issues highlighted by member organisations.

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
- 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

The FAQ, in particular, explains the pathway for supports for family carers and includes dedicated guidance and advice on a range of issues relating to COVID-19 together with a list of local and national helpline numbers.

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/>

In addition, family carers are also advised to keep an eye on the following weblinks for guidance and advisory links (including in terms of social care/ clinical matters) relating to COVID-19, as well as the Inclusion Ireland and Family Carers Ireland websites and helplines.

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/>

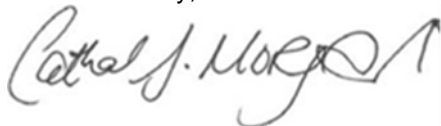
<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/at-risk-groups.html>

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/primarycareguidance/adviseriskassessmentandmanagementofpatients/>

As COVID-19 is an evolving and unprecedented situation, the HSE will continue to review and update guidance and advice to its staff, service providers, service users and families.

It is important to emphasise that since the publication of the Governments 'Roadmap for reopening Society & Business' as well as the 'Return to work safely' protocol, the HSE is finalising plans to re-establish vital non-covid supports and 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. In effect this means that the HSE will soon set out its plans in terms of how we can safely begin to commence services, which will have to comply with guidance as set out by the National Public Health Emergency Team as well as Public Health specialists in the HSE.

Yours sincerely,



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