



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,
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28th May 2020

Deputy Martin Heydon,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: martin.heydon@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Heydon,

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 7027/20

To ask the Minister for Health the status of the guidance and provisions in place to assist family carers that have concerns regarding guidance on Covid-19 (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Details supplied; what to do should I contract the virus, who will take over my care duties when we have no family to do that? What do I do regarding my other children when restrictions slowly lift with regards to sending my least vulnerable children out in the world to keep Ava safe who is the most vulnerable within the home? Where do I obtain ppe from because currently I have 10 disposable face masks, 2 bottles of hand sanitiser and a box of latex gloves that were kindly supplied by family carers Ireland? I'm currently trying to source reusable face masks but for a family of 6 that is an expensive endeavour working out to be approximately €60 to have one to wear and one to wash and 10 single use masks is nothing should a case of corona virus arrive in this house. We also have no single use aprons. If like the hse stated there are guidelines in place regarding how family carers are to access supports should they or their loved ones become infected they aren't publicising or highlighting them very well, I have asked family carers Ireland what the guidelines are, I've asked other family carers and to date no one can tell me what support there is or how to access it

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/>

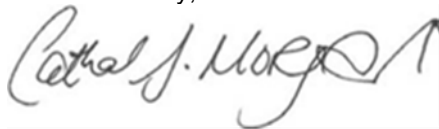
<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/at-risk-groups.html>

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

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.

The HSE is very aware of the impact of the pandemic on people with disabilities, their families and carers and have over the past few weeks developed a number of working groups to plan and develop guidance on how we will be able to deliver supports, albeit in a new way and under the Public Health guidance. 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**