



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.

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14<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Deputy Denis Naughten  
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Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.  
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Dear Deputy Naughten,

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 29125/20**

*To ask the Minister for Health the funding allocated through the disability vote to pay staff while contact tracing; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**HSE Response**

The presence and threat of COVID-19 in Ireland is ongoing and has resulted in significant challenges for service users, their carers and families and for service providers. The HSE acknowledges that during the current COVID-19 pandemic situation, it was not possible to maintain full services.

Having said that, some services continued with staff working with service users and their families remotely and using technology in new and effective ways.

The HSE has fully committed to working in partnership with service providers to achieve maximum benefits for people with disabilities and their families, and aims to ensure that resources including staffing resources available are used in the most effective manner possible.

Effective redeployment of health service employees was a core element of the response by the HSE to COVID-19. Hospital groups and Community Health Organisations (CHOs) temporarily redeployed staff to support their business continuity plans, emerging services developing in direct response to COVID 19 and in response to the health and availability of staff in their own organisations. Many grades and categories of staff were redeployed to other services such as the helplines, contact tracing, testing, public health, service support and other areas.

In the same way corporate and national services, together with Tusla, also made staff available to support the overall HSE effort during this time.

Staff who were redeployed to COVID-19 related duties continued to be paid their usual salary from their existing substantive payroll department. Employees continued to be coded on their usual department timesheets regardless of where they were working or what they were doing. The following web link provides information regarding the redeployment of staff:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/resources/hr-circulars/revised-policy-on-redeployment-of-staff-during-covid-19-infection-v4-0.pdf>

## Resumption of Disability Services

In the context of the Governments Resilience & Recovery Framework (2020 – 2021), the HSE regards the provision of disability services as essential to maintaining a response to people with a disability. All disability services must follow public health guidance in this area, including the prevention and management of COVID-19 related infection. The HSE and its funded disability partners will continue to provide disability services in line with public health guidance and direction and having regard to the availability of staffing resources.

This must be supported by way of assurance and oversight from the HSE's Chief Clinical Officer along with the NPHET, so that we can do so in a safe manner. This means that services, whilst being delivered in new ways, will gradually be re-introduced to people with disabilities. Therefore staff will be required to revert to their substantive assignment as part of a planned and co-ordinated approach in each CHO.

Reference is drawn to the following HSE weblink which provides updates and guidance for disability service providers, including 'service resumption planning guidance'.

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

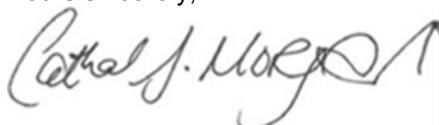
Attention is also drawn to the following important web links which provides up to date information resources in respect of COVID-19.

[www.hspc.ie](http://www.hspc.ie)

<https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/c36c85-covid-19-coronavirus/>

The HSE and Service Providers recognise the critical need and importance of disability supports for people and their families. The impact of COVID-19 on people's lives has and continues to be very significant. Our collective aim is to restore services in a safe way and in line with the very significant investment made by the State and funded agencies and we will continue to work with service users and their families/carers to ensure that we achieve this aim.

Yours sincerely,



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