



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>

27th October 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 29733/20

To ask the Minister for Health the budget requested by each disability service to resume providing services for children and adults in tabular form.

HSE Response

In preparing for and responding to COVID-19 and to fully align with Public Health guidance as recommended via the NPHE, the HSE and its partner service providers put in place a range of measures. These included the prioritisation of vital residential and home support services whilst curtailing or closing certain services such as day services, as well as 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.

The presence and ongoing threat of COVID-19 in Ireland has resulted in significant challenges for service providers, families and most importantly, people with disabilities. During these challenging times disability services and supports such as residential services, day services, home supports, Personal Assistant supports, respite services and children's services were either suspended or delivered in alternative ways in line with Public Health guidance. The HSE is aware that the changes in service delivery resulted in significant stressors being placed on families and individuals with disabilities across Ireland.

The HSE acknowledges the role and contribution of non-statutory agencies in the development and provision of health and personal social services and acknowledges the contribution of and engagement between Service Providers and the HSE during the ongoing COVID -19 pandemic.

It is expected that there are cost pressures in respect of facilities modification, PPE expenses, and potential increased staffing costs to mitigate against activity delivery restrictions inherent with working alongside the continued presence of COVID-19 and maintaining the prevailing social distancing and infection prevention and control requirements.

During the public health emergency, the HSE developed and circulated Financial Guidance re COVID Related Expenditure & Section 38/39 Provider Organisations, the purpose of which is to provide guidance to

CHOs regarding potential service and related financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic for providers delivering 'essential' or 'core' Health and Social Care services during the COVID-19 Emergency Response.

Please note that the guidance is temporary and remains applicable for the duration of the emergency only.

Supports provided by the HSE to organisations during the pandemic include the following:

- PPE continues to be provided to all funded agencies.
- Infection Prevention and Control support, advice and training continues.
- Public Health advice/support is ongoing with regard to suspected/positive cases.
- Residential Preparedness Groups
- Facilitating the testing of all residential staff.
- A COVID response Team to assist and support residential service providers. This team will now oversee and support the reshaping of disability services as a result of COVID 19.
- Funding for emergency residential placements
- A regular call/forum with all funded agencies to support them throughout the duration of the crisis
- Accommodation;
- Logistics in the form of transport.
- Webinars to discuss the most recent guidance in place and scenarios specific to disability services. The purpose of the webinars also are to clarify any perceived inconsistencies between the HPSC general guidance and the Disability Services bespoke guidance.
- HSE Disabilities engage with the Disability Umbrella Representative Bodies on a two-weekly basis.

With regard to funding, CHOs are having ongoing discussions in general with some of the organisations in their areas. While additional funding has been agreed in some areas, in the main, additional funding has yet to be disbursed in this regard as a period of review, analysis and validation is required to determine the legitimate necessity for additional funding above 2020 pre-COVID agreed levels.

The HSE also welcomes the announcement of an additional €100 million secured for Disability Services in the recent budget. The specific breakdown of this investment will be discussed as part of the normal service planning process and will be detailed in the Letter of Determination from the Department of Health. However, the HSE anticipates that significant funding will be allocated to support Voluntary Service Providers.

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.

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

<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.

Sláintecare Funding

In August 2020 €7.8m was secured through Sláintecare to address overdue Assessments of Need. This funding has been provided on a once off basis and is strictly time bound. This funding has been allocated to CHO areas based on the numbers of overdue AONs at 30th June 2020. Each CHO area has developed a plan to address this backlog through a combination of

- Restoration of relevant clinicians to children's disability services
- Waitlist initiative utilising existing clinicians working overtime at weekends or evenings
- Procurement of private assessments
- Commitment to filling maternity leaves

Recruitment of Additional Clinical Staff for fixed term contracts of 6 months from 1/9/20

Yours sincerely,



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