



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,  
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25<sup>th</sup> February 2021

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Dear Deputy Tully

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:7635/21**

*To ask the Minister for Health the number of day services for persons with disabilities which have reopened; the capacity these services are operating at; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**HSE Response**

In line with public health guidance, at the outset of the pandemic, adult day services, along with many other services, were significantly reduced to limit exposure to COVID-19.

The HSE acknowledges the impact and effects of the closure of day centres for adults with disabilities during the current COVID-19 pandemic and is fully cognisant of the stress this can cause to people with disabilities and their families.

To mitigate the difficulties, the HSE engaged with providers to ensure that where possible, some level of service was maintained, based on prioritising those with the greatest needs. In this respect, Providers continued to provide outreach supports to people in the greatest need.

Prior to the onset of COVID 19 there were approx. 19,000 adults in receipt of day service supports throughout the country.

Day service locations closed in mid-March but service supports continued for day service recipients albeit in a different way. In that regard reports for June showed:-

- Almost 5,000 of these adults received a full 24/7 service which includes individualised supports
- A further 4,000 adults received face to face supports albeit at a reduced level (Covid safety)
- Of the 1,000 day service locations nationally, HSE funded day services continued to provide supports at almost 300 locations to support people who were in a priority category with families under significant pressure.

One of the core principles of day service supports is community inclusion and active citizenship. Whilst adults with disabilities attend a service location – generally this location acts as a hub and where possible supports are provided in the community and people are supported to access a whole range of community based services. The closing down of society and lack of access to the community led to the development of new ways of working by the service provider sector, including a range of programmes focusing on mental health and wellbeing, physical exercise e.g. Yoga, Pilates etc. Adults in receipt of Rehabilitative Training in some instances had their normal daily programme delivered remotely so it was full service delivery for this group but by remote working.

The HSE worked closely with service providers through representative organisations such as the National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers, Disability Federation of Ireland and the Not for Profit Association and Inclusion Ireland, who represent people with intellectual disabilities and their families, to develop a Framework for the resumption of day services and a guidance document to support this.

Day Service locations commenced reopening in August for all recipients of day services.

Due to social distancing guidance the capacity in day service locations has been reduced and therefore the quantum of service provided to people that receive day services is reduced.

There are some locations that have been retained as COVID isolation units but funding has been provided for Service Providers to source temporary locations as replacements for the duration of COVID-19. Where day service locations are being used as isolation units, day service staff are providing outreach support to the service users that would usually attend these locations.

The latest update regarding the number of locations being retained as COVID isolation units remains at 7 locations. All service users who were attending these locations are being accommodated and receiving their service in alternative locations

The HSE welcomes the recent announcement from Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly TD and Minister of State for Disability, Anne Rabbitte TD that €10 million is being made available to support the resumption of day services and enhanced home support services for disability service users. The €10 million funding is being drawn down from the National Action Plan on COVID-19 - €7.5 million will increase the level of day service provision and €2.5 million will provide intensive support packages for children and young people with complex/high support needs.

The €7.5 m allocation for day services will be utilised to increase staffing in disability day services so as to increase the quantum of day service provision to in excess of 14,000 adults. Pre COVID the majority of these adults were in receipt of a full five day service but since the day services have resumed in August social distancing has reduced the capacity in each day service location and people are getting a 2/3 day service. The additional funding should provide one additional day's service for each of these adults.

### **Resumption of Disability Services**

Notwithstanding the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic and in the context of the Irish Government's Resilience & Recovery Framework (2020 – 2021), the HSE regards the provision of disability services, including day service provision, as essential to maintaining a response to all people with a disability.

Currently almost 19,000 people are in receipt of disability Day Service supports at 1,041 locations around the country. These supports are provided by approximately 95 service provider agencies

At the end of November 2020, each CHO asked their Adult Day service providers to return the quantum of support provided in their locations. The National average quantum of support in locations at the end of November was 51% and when include remote supports were included, the quantum increase to over 60%.

A detailed return was scheduled to be completed at the end of January 2021 however, due to the COVID level 5 lockdown and associated impacts, it was deemed essential to gather the following information:-  
Instances of providers indicating that service users do not wish to attend due to COVID fears.

- How prevalent are closures of locations or reduced supports due to COVID absences.

- Any evidence of initiatives to support service users at this time.
- Confirmation that where possible locations are open and service users can attend in line with their COVID risk assessment.
- Any other relevant feedback

The reported information is that although the quantum of service available to service users in locations remains at 51%, approximately 50% of service users have chosen not to attend at the location due to their own or their families COVID fears. Remote day service supports continue to be provided to service users while they are not attending at the location.

All disability services must follow public health guidance in this area, including the prevention and management of covid related infection. The HSE and its funded disability partners continues to provide supports, including day services, in line with public health guidance and direction and having regard to the availability of staffing resources

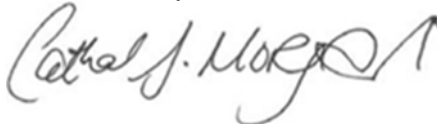
Reference is drawn to the following HSE weblink which provides updates and guidance for disability service providers, including 'service resumption planning guidance':

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

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

Yours sincerely,



**Dr. Cathal Morgan,**  
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**Community Operations**