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5th February 2021

PQ 44659/20 - To ask the Minister for Health if a commitment will be given that staff working in the integration, intervention services will not be redeployed when the roll-out of the Covid-19 vaccination commences.

- Sorca Clarke

Dear Deputy Clarke,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for response.

The on-going COVID-19 pandemic has required significant rearrangement of services including redeployment of staff to ensure the health of the public. There has been significant progress in returning staff from Covid Services to core services between the period of June to October and the pace of staff return increasing as the Swabbers and Contact Tracing grades of staff were recruited during quarter 3 periods. However, there was a plateau in the consistent upward trend of Covid cases in November caused in part by the second wave of the pandemic and the current third wave from mid to late December has again impacted staff return to core service provision as a result of increased testing, support to long term residential facilities both private, voluntary and public in Older Persons, Disabilities and Mental Health Services.

To address this current third wave of Covid infections there was a requirement to prioritise the level of Community Services delivered during this period. Building upon the experience from earlier waves of the pandemic, Community Services have developed a prioritisation framework to support local decisions to be made on service prioritisation. This approach will ensure that services will be focused on identifying and supporting patients who have the greatest need and enabling staff to be deployed where necessary to support these patients. Where services are curtailed or reduced, this will be in line with clinical approval, a shared national position and with an appropriate risk assessment and communication with providers, service users and families. It is the intention of Community Services that full services would return as soon as is safe and practicable.

As can be seen above every effort will be made to ensure that services working with children with additional / special needs will not be impacted.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Farnan
A/A.N.D. Community Operations

