



15th April 2021

Deputy Holly Cairns,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 15912/21 – To ask the Minister for Health the role of the liaison officers appointed to work with the persons affected by the CervicalCheck scandal; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Holly Cairns

Dear Deputy Cairns,

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.

Following the government decision in May 2018 to make available a package of supports to those affected by the Cervical Check controversy the HSE made immediate arrangements to facilitate this.

The HSE appointed Liaison Officers to support clients and their families affected by the issues relating to the Cervical Check service in each of the nine Community Healthcare Organisations (CHOs). From May 2018, CHO Liaison Officers initiated contact with, and met with clients affected by the Cervical Check issue. It was through these client meetings that support package guidance was provided and client led supports were made available.

The following is a summary of the main types of supports provided by the HSE through the Community Support Scheme since May 2018:

Medical Cards

The role of the liaison officers is to support people in their medical card applications.

Medical Expenses

All out-of-pocket healthcare expenses and the cost of prescribed medication are met, to the extent that these items are not already provided under existing public schemes or through private health insurance, where relevant. This includes the cost of any medicines which have been prescribed by the woman's treating clinician and which may not be covered by either their medical card or their private health insurance, should they have such a policy. In the past year, clients have also accessed a range of medical specialities and diagnostic assessments with the cost being met by the HSE this includes supports in relation to the management of fertility.

Primary Care and Community Healthcare Supports

Community Healthcare Organisations have facilitated clients and their families to access a broad range of community healthcare services in Primary Care such as counselling, physiotherapy, nursing and occupational therapy. Clients have also been facilitated to access healthcare services where required through a private provider with the cost being met by the HSE.

Health and Social Care Supports

Supports are provided where appropriate in respect of other specific instances of health and social care costs that may arise for these women and their families, including travel costs and childcare, in recognition of the practical challenges that arise in such difficult circumstances.

Information Provision

In addition to providing information about, and facilitating the provision of a broad range of health services, Liaison Officers have supported clients in accessing their medical records. Liaison within the HSE and other state agencies. Where clients require inputs from the wider organisation including the Acute Hospital Division, National Screening Service, Primary Care Reimbursement Service (PCRS) and other national offices, these requests are routed through the Community Operations national project team via Liaison Officers. Liaison Officers have also supported clients who require assistance in applying for and accessing other relevant state services.

CHO Liaison Officers continue to facilitate eligible clients to access the range of supports as detailed by the Department of Health. All supports undertaken are client driven and put in place via the Liaison Officer as soon as is suitable to the client. Liaison Officers also provide support and advice, and assist clients in navigating and accessing health and social care supports appropriate to their needs.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,



Yvonne O'Neill,
Interim National Director,
Community Operations