



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,
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19th October 2021

Deputy Ivana Bacik,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: ivana.bacik@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Bacik,

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 47872/21

To ask the Minister for Health if the Time to Move on from Congregated Settings policy of his Department will facilitate service users to continue to live in congregated settings in circumstances in which it is their will and preference.

HSE Response

A Time to Move on from Congregated Settings

In June 2011 the Report “Time to Move on from Congregated Settings – A Strategy for Community Inclusion” was published, which identified that in 2008 approximately 4,000 individuals with disabilities lived in congregated type settings, defined as where ten or more people reside in a single living unit or are campus based. It found that notwithstanding the commitment and initiative of dedicated staff and management, that there were a significant number of people still experiencing institutional living conditions where they lacked basic privacy and dignity, and lived their lives apart from any community and family.

The report initially recommended a seven year timeframe for the implementation of the policy and the 2016 Programme for Government identified that there should be a one- third reduction in the number of individuals residing on congregated settings by the year 2021, which reflects the continued commitment of the Government to the policy of decongregation, whilst acknowledging that the process of supporting each person to transition from a congregated setting to a community based service in a sustainable and safe way, requires planning and time.

The target for de-congregation for 2020 was set at 132 and 126 people had transitioned from congregated settings to homes in the Community by year end. Time to Move On from Congregated Settings is progressing and continues to demonstrate very positive results for service users who have transitioned to living in homes in community settings. Overall, the population in congregated settings is 50% lower than those identified in the original report; 16 Centres have been fully de-congregated and now there are around 1,800 people remaining in congregated settings:

- A total of 945 people had completed their transition to the community by 01/01/2020.
- 6 centres have closed completely and now support residents entirely in the community.
- There are 19 centres that now have less than 10 people remaining in the setting/campus.

- There are 1,494 residents (76%) now living in units with no more than nine other people and of this 343 residents (18%) are living in units with no more than three others.
- There are only 13 campuses' with more than 50 residents remaining compared to 24 settings in 2012.
- In 2012 the largest campus was home to 227 residents and the largest residential building was home to 112 people. Currently, the largest campus has 145 residents and the largest residential building has 28 residents.

In 2021, the HSE has been allocated an additional €4.1 million to facilitate 144 further moves from congregated to community based settings in 2021 and acquisition of 30 new houses to support de-congregations across the year. We are currently on target to achieve this by year end.

The HSE welcomes the commitment given by the Government to the continuation of the successful decongregation programme and commits to a further move of people with disabilities from congregated settings to homes in the community, with the necessary supports.

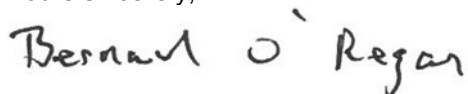
The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the stark reality of the risk to health that living in a congregated setting can present for the residents. The vast majority of people with disabilities living in the residential services now live in small group homes with no more than nine others.

In addressing the needs of adults with a disability the full range of community services available are tailored to meet the needs of the individual. The health service works with local authorities, the Department of Education and Skills and other public services as well as the voluntary sector in seeking to tailor the services to best fit the needs of the individual.

The HSE, working with the Community Healthcare Organisations, makes every effort to accommodate people's wishes and support them to move to the home of their choice with support based on assessed need.

It is acknowledged that there may be people with disabilities and /or a number of families who have expressed that they do not wish their family member to leave the congregated setting. The HSE Community Healthcare Organisations continue to engage with individuals/families who have expressed an interest in exploring the possibility of community living as is their will and preference while also keeping sight of the agreed national policy in relation to "A Time to Move On from Congregated Settings"

Yours sincerely,



Bernard O'Regan
Head of Operations - Disability Services,
Community Operations