



12<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Deputy Violet-Anne Wynne,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

**PQ 47036/21 - To ask the Minister for Health if the public sector speech and language therapists that were redeployed during the Covid-19 period will be reinstated in their initial capacity; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

**- Violet-Anne Wynne**

Dear Deputy Wynne,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (PQ 47036/21), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Building upon the experience from earlier waves of the pandemic, Community Services developed a prioritisation framework to support local decisions made on service prioritisation. This approach ensures that services are 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 is in line with clinical approval, a shared national position and with an appropriate risk assessment and communication with providers, service users and families.

Community Operations is working to ensure that all speech and language therapists are returned to their core duties as soon as is practicable. We are engaging with the Heads of Primary Care in each CHO to ensure that the return of speech and language therapy staff to core duties is a priority. However, it is important to note that Covid-19 is still a serious threat and it is incumbent on CHO's health services to deploy their staff to address the prevailing local circumstances.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

**Seán McArt**  
General Manager Primary Care  
National Community Operations