



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Ceannasaí Náisiúnta Oibríochtaí Meabhairshláinte
Ospidéal Naomh Lómáin, Baile Phámar Baile Átha Cliath 20.

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Deputy Mark Ward.
Dail Eireann,
Dublin 2.

10th March 2022

PQ Number: 10596/22

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health the rationale to no longer pay persons with lived experience, otherwise known as service users, family members and carers who are involved in the provision of recovery education; if this will be reviewed; and if he will make a statement on the matter - Mark Ward

Dear Deputy Ward,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

The HSE Mental Health service is committed to the integration of Service User Family Member Carer (SUFMC) lived and recovery experience as a key tool of service improvement in the development of 'recovery oriented services' as set out in our national policy 'Sharing The Vision'.

Recovery education is a key driver in building recovery knowledge within service users and Mental Health staff and each CHO is required to have a Recovery Education service. Many areas have developed the Recovery College model. The inclusion of experts by experience with both personal and family/carer supporter experience, is essential to the delivery of recovery education. Currently, the HSE has approximately over 70 recovery education staff in place across the CHO's mainly through our NGO partners, Mental Health Ireland.

In answer to your question regarding the sessional payment of SUFMC's known as the 'remuneration scheme', this was for work on recovery education programmes and other service improvement initiatives for the HSE. This scheme was a capacity building and pilot initiative that was never envisaged as a long term intervention. The current system of employing people with lived experience as Recovery Education Facilitators ensures the consistent delivery of a quality, co-produced Recovery Education service. This system also provides more sustained personal development and career progression opportunities for SUFMC's through these expert by experience roles.

The HSE has a duty of care to all the SUFMC's who it engages in Service Improvement work and the reimbursement scheme exposed some participants to the risk of negatively impacting on their social welfare and other benefits and incurring tax liabilities. For this reason and to honour our duty of care and



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responsibility to SUFMC's the scheme was closed. A change in legislation is required in order to safely remunerate SUFMC's for service improvement work outside contracted roles.

It is my understanding is that the Department of Health is currently studying the feasibility of such an approach.

SUFMC 's who do not wish to take on formal roles, still have the opportunity to volunteer in recovery education delivery, as support to Recovery Education facilitators. The HSE recognise the value of volunteering and provide prompt reimbursement of expenses incurred. Personal development and training opportunities are also provided to volunteers in recognition of the value they provide in recovery education and other service improvement initiatives.

I trust this information is of assistance to you. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Ryan
Assistant National Director - Head of Operations
National Mental Health Services