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Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,
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15th February 2022

Deputy Violet Anne Wynne,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: violet-anne.wynne@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Wynne,

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 5673/22

To ask the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question No. 1036 of 2 November 2021, the amount of the €7.1 million allocated for decongregation and transferring under persons under 65 years from nursing homes that was spent or released in 2021; the amount that was unspent; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

HSE Response

In October 2020, the HSE welcomed the additional €100 million that was secured for Disability Services in 2020 for the 2021 budget.

Among other service developments included in the 2021 key priority areas was the provision of €3m to support to transition of 18 people under the age of 65 years to move from Nursing Home to the community and €4.1m to support decongregation, with the aim of 144 further moves from congregated to community based settings in 2021 and acquisition of 30 new houses to support de-congregations over 2021.

Transition of People under 65 years from Nursing Homes to Community Settings

To support people aged under 65 living in nursing homes to move to homes of their choosing in the community, the HSE is working in collaboration with service providers, the person and their families, where this is the wish of the person. As each individual's situation and circumstances are unique to them, a person by person approach is being taken. Supports will be based on each individual's needs.

Each CHO is leading the transition of at least two people based on the allocations in the National Service Plan, 2021. The support needs of each person are assessed and as mentioned above, this subsequently informs the transition plan and support for the person. CHOs are on track to meet the target for 2021 and a summary report will be compiled at that stage to inform further developments in this area. A budget of €3 million was secured for this, which equates to €166,000 per person for direct care support hours. This project is being delivered by the nine Community Healthcare Areas (CHOs) and each Area is working within this budget. There was no additional funding for capital or project overhead costs included.

Data at the end of November 2021 shows that 14 people aged under 65 living in nursing homes have been supported to move to homes of their choosing in the community. Work is on-going for 4 more individuals to move by year end /early January 2022.



The National Service Plan for 2022 has yet to be published, however, it is likely that significant funding will be allocated to this area with a further 63 people planned to move from nursing home settings to homes of their choosing in the community.

Service Reform Fund Project

The HSE has appointed a Project Lead under the Service Reform Fund to undertake a mapping exercise of the current population to establish a database of people under the age of 65 in nursing homes. This will support identification of those inappropriately placed, to enable a determination of the supports required. This project is funded up to mid-2022.

A key outcome of NSP 2021 & 2022 and the SRF project will be to gather and collate information to determine the overall requirements and costs associated with the transitioning of people from nursing homes: revenue, once off and ongoing, pay and non-pay and the minor capital and capital costs. It is expected that there will be a range in funding required to support each person which will be influenced by:

- level and type of support needed,
- the current funding arrangements (potential for de-bundling),
- planned post- transition arrangement (alternative community residential service, personalised budget, return to existing family home etc).

The additional care options and true cost of decongregation for the people in nursing homes is still being explored as in many cases these are the cohort of residents that remain in these settings due to the requirement for significant nursing supports and appropriate accommodation.

Measures to prevent young persons from entering nursing homes will continue to be provided through the use of support services such as respite, home support and personal assistance services.

Implementation Steering Committee

The HSE is currently in the process of establishing an Implementation Steering Committee (ISC) under the aegis of the Office of the Chief Operations Officer (COO). The work of the ISC will oversee the implementation of the recommendations set out in the Ombudsman's report and provide a level of assurance regarding the health, safety and dignity of residents, aged under 65 years, living in residential care settings and ensure the efficient transition to alternative care settings where appropriate.

Time to Move on from Congregated Settings

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. The original 2012 report identified over 4,000 people living in 72 congregated settings. With the incremental progress made since 2012 to support people to transition to homes in the community, there are now less than 1,600 people remaining in the tracked congregated settings identified in the original report. In summary:

- 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 campus's 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.

Pointedly, 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.

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.



A total of 135 people transitioned from congregated settings to homes in the Community in 2021 against a target of 144 for the year. Work remains on-going to address the key challenges arising in relation to the procurement of appropriate housing in a buoyant housing market, and the undertaking of necessary works to ensure HIQA compliance – which must be secured before any new facility can become operational. Just over €1 million was unspent at end December 2021.

It is expected that NSP 2022 will provide for a further 143 people with a disability living in congregated settings to move to more person-centred homes in the community.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bernard O'Regan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a clear, legible font.

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