



Ceann Seirbhíse, Míchumais  
Baile Átha Cliath Theas, Cill Dara &  
Iarthar Chill Mhantáin

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**5 August 2022**

**Eoin Ó Broin TD**  
**Dáil Éireann**  
**Leinster House**  
**Kildare Street**  
**Dublin 2**

**Ref: PQ 39600/22**

**Re: Peamount Healthcare, Newcastle, Co. Dublin**

*“To ask the Minister for Health if his attention has been drawn to the fact that a number of staff employed by a section 38 organisation (details supplied) who were deemed eligible and received the pandemic recognition payment have now been advised they are not eligible and are liable for overpayments despite working in an environment that warranted their inclusion in sequence group 1 and 2 of the vaccination programme and being in direct contact with patients; if this is correct; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”*

**-Eoin Ó Broin**

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**Dear Deputy Ó Broin**

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question which has been referred by the Minister for Health to the Health Service Executive for direct response. I have requested Chief Executive of Peamount Healthcare to examine the matter and the following outlines the position.

Peamount Healthcare as with all other Section 38 Organisations received instruction to implement HSE HR Circular 12/2022 which related to the Special Pandemic Recognition Award.

As a multispecialty organisation, following the declaration of the Covid 19 pandemic, we put in place zones across the campus to ensure safe and effective management for Patients, Residents and Staff. These zones ensured that staff did not cross over into other zones on the campus. Staff working with residents and patients were segregated into specific zones. The individuals in question did not work in these zones.

The HSE set out clear guidelines for organisations, including the eligibility criteria and the staff categories that might be included in such a payment. Peamount Healthcare in determining who should receive the payment followed these guidelines.

These included:

- Those eligible: Employees who, between 1st of March 2020 and 30th of June 2021, worked in an environment which warranted their inclusion in Sequence Group 1 and 2 for the Vaccination programme.

- This measure is ring fenced to staff working ordinarily onsite in COVID-19 exposed healthcare environments within the period between 1 March 2020 and 30 June 2021.
- The additional risks that were set out in the vaccination sequence groups 1 & 2 for eligible Health Care Workers?
- Direct physical contact with patients/clients, deceased persons, body parts, blood, body substances, infectious material or surfaces or equipment that might contain these (e.g. soiled linen, surgical equipment, syringes).
- Contact that would allow the acquisition or transmission of diseases that are spread by respiratory means, such as: Workers with frequent/prolonged face to face contact with patients or clients (e.g. interviewing or counselling individual clients or small groups; performing reception duties in an emergency/outpatient department, attending to patients/clients in their own homes);
- Where the normal work location is a clinical area such as a ward, outpatient clinic (e.g. ward clerks, patient transport officers);
- Where the normal work location means workers are frequently required to attend clinical settings (e.g. persons employed in food services who deliver meals to patients on a hospital ward, maintenance workers who make repairs on a hospital ward with patients present

Following an evaluation of all staff roles and activity (including zones where they worked) during the proscribed timeframe, a determination of the staff within Peamount Healthcare who were eligible to receive the payment was made. All managers were requested to inform those staff who were ineligible prior to the issuing of the payment in the June payroll.

Unfortunately, due to a clerical error, a number of staff who were not exposed to the listed additional risks received the Pandemic Special Payment. As soon as this error was identified, staff were contacted and informed that, as with all overpayments, there would be a requirement to pay this money back. At this meeting staff members were informed that individual arrangements would be facilitated.

We regret that this error was made and any distress it may have caused to our employees. Peamount Healthcare has ensured all staff are aware of the HSE appeals process.

I hope this answers your query, if you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

P.P



Deborah Jacob

**Head of Service, Disability Services**

**Dublin South, Kildare and West Wicklow Community Healthcare.**