



Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,
31-33 Sráid Chaitríona, Luimneach.

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12th October 2022

Deputy Neasa Hourigan,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: neasa.hourigan@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Hourigan,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the following parliamentary questions, which were submitted to this department for response.

PQ 47465/22

To ask the Minister for Health the progress that has been made in establishing dedicated community neurorehabilitation teams for each CHO, as outlined in the National Strategy & Policy for the Provision of Neuro-Rehabilitation Services in Ireland report; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

PQ 47467/22

To ask the Minister for Health his plans to ensure continued funding for the Neurological Rehabilitation Centre, An Saol, which offers the opportunity to those with a brain injury to live their life in the community; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

HSE Response

The Programme for Government – 'Our Shared Future' - includes a commitment for advancing neuro-rehabilitation services in the community. The Health Service Executive is leading on the implementation framework in respect of the recommendations of the National Policy and Strategy for the provision of Neuro-Rehabilitation Services in Ireland 2011-2015.

The Neuro-Rehabilitation Strategy Implementation Framework (IF) was launched in February 2019. The overarching aim of the Strategy is the development of neuro-rehabilitation services to improve patient outcomes by providing safe, high quality, person-centred neuro-rehabilitation at the lowest appropriate level of complexity. This must be integrated across the care pathway, and provided as close to home as possible or in specialist centres where necessary. These services are to be configured into population based managed clinical rehabilitation networks (MCRNs).

Funding was approved to support the introduction of a managed clinical rehabilitation network demonstrator project. The focus of the demonstrator project is the development of post-acute and community neuro-rehabilitation services across Community Healthcare Areas (CHOs) 6 and 7.

Areas being explored include common waitlists and direct referral protocols. The overarching aim is the development of population based MCRN's around the country. The demonstrator project encompasses a change management model to test ahead of national implementation.



Disability Services CHO 6 are currently working on the recruitment process, capital funding for the service has already been received and the location for the Community Neurorehabilitation Team (CNRT) has been identified.

Disability Services CHO 7 are working with Primary Care to identify the location & governance for the Community Neurorehabilitation Team in this area.

In both CHO 6 and CHO 7, Disability Services Community Healthcare are working with Primary Care and the voluntary organisations to identify a suitable governance model for each of these teams. A location for the Community Neuro-rehab Team (CNRT) has been agreed on in CHO 6 and work is ongoing to confirm a location within CHO 7.

There has been tangible progress with the focus and trajectory of the MCRN in the development of the post-acute and community neurorehabilitation teams and services as well as the introduction of a rehab co-ordinator role for the network.

The implementation of a 10 bedded neurorehabilitation unit in Peamount has improved timely and early access to post-acute specialist rehabilitation services for patients with complex disability including those neurological complications associated with severe COVID infection from the Dublin Midlands Hospital Group. These 10 beds opened on the 29th July 2020 and 19 patients were admitted between then and 31st December 2020. In 2021, for the full year, 64 patients were admitted with an average length of stay of 54 days across the 17 Months.

These new beds introduce some 3,500 additional specialist rehab bed days per annum into the system and are expected to reduce the NRH waiting list by over 30% and take direct referrals from AMNCH, SJH, SVUH, Beaumont & the Mater for patients with neurological conditions. (these new beds are for patients whose primary residence is within CHO 7 rather than for those who are referred from particular hospitals all be it they will take referrals from these hospitals if the patient lives within the catchment area).

An Saol Foundation is a company limited by Guarantee

An Saol Foundation is a company limited by Guarantee (since November 2014) and a charity registered with the Charities Regulator (RCN 20149796) and the Revenue Commissioners (CHY 21684).

This organisation was established by a family of a service user to provide adequate and on-going support to people with Severe Acquired Brain Injury (sABI).

The An Saol pilot project is a three-year pilot programme approved for funding via the Department of Health and operated by this Foundation. It is the stated goal of An Saol to operate a day centre for three to five persons with Severe Acquired Brain Injury offering an intensive and inclusive neurological rehabilitation programme, informed by international practice. The covid-19 pandemic paused the delivery of services in An Saol since March 2020 and the service is re-opening cautiously at this time.

The pilot project connects the practice with international research which suggests that demanding physical and mental activity may assist patients with significant acquired injuries to regain some function.

The pilot project has also referenced their goal to prepare the ground for the development of a permanent space (residential and respite) for life and living for persons with sABI. This long-term goal is separate to the existing funded pilot project.

An Saol was approved as an initiative by DoH and does not fall within Day Services delivery model.

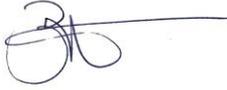
In 2018, a Service Agreement with An Saol and the HSE was signed with a commitment from the Department of Health to fund the pilot project over a three year phase (€1,500,000). An Saol have



received €500,000 in 2019, €138,888 in 2020, €166,664 in 2021, €500,000 2022. CHO DNCC (CHO 9) facilitate the administrative management of the Service Arrangement.

The HSE is currently in the process of commissioning independent clinical review of the pilot project and service.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B. Higgins', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Brian J. Higgins

Assistant National Director

Change Planning and Delivery – Disability and Mental Health Services