



**Stiúrtóra Náisiúnta
Acmhainní Daonna**

Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhísí,
Sláinte Ospidéal Dr. Steevens',
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**National Director
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Seán Canney T.D.

14th June, 2023

PQ 25619/23 To ask the Minister for Health if he is aware that many healthcare workers who worked in care homes during the Covid pandemic and who were of the understanding that they would receive the pandemic special recognition payment for non-HSE and non-Section 38 organisations are now being informed that they will not receive the payment and are being informed that this only applies to homes which are registered with HIQA, while many homes do not fall under the remit of HIQA; if he is aware of the difficulties that this is causing for these healthcare workers; and if he will make a statement on the matter. - Seán Canney

Dear Deputy,

I refer to your recent Parliamentary Question which was sent to the HSE for response.

As you are aware the 'Pandemic Special Recognition Payment' (PSRP) results from the Government decision (19th January 2022) to provide specific financial recognition to eligible frontline health care workers based on the particular additional risks they faced in performance of duty during the pandemic.

This PSRP is for employees from non-HSE and non-Section 38 organisations who, between 1 March 2020 and 30 June 2021, worked in a frontline covid-exposed clinical environment - settings where staff unavoidably had to treat, care for or be in close contact with those who were known to have Covid-19 or Covid symptoms.

This process (and Guidelines) is specific to eligible employees of the following non-HSE and non-Section 38 organisations:

- (1) Private Sector long-term residential care facilities for older people (nursing homes) and hospices, whether they be Private, Voluntary, Section 39
- (2) Eligible staff working on-site in Section 39 long-term residential care facilities for people with disabilities;
- (3) Agency/contract staff who worked in clinical settings for the HSE or within Cohorts 1, 2 and 4 (e.g. an nurse, doctor, cleaner, paramedic);
- (4) Health Care Support Assistants (also known as home help / home care / home support) contracted to the HSE.

In order to be eligible, employees must also meet the two qualifying criteria below:

- The employee must have worked for at least 4 weeks between 1st March 2020 and 30th June 2021 – this does not have to be a continuous 4 week period
- This work must have been in a frontline covid-exposed clinical environment, and which warranted the employee's inclusion in Sequence Group 1 or 2 for the Vaccination Programme.

Payments have commenced to the employers who submitted applications that have passed the verification process. The HSE are not dealing with individual employee queries, instead employees are asked to link with their employers in the first instance with regard to their eligibility. The table below identifies the claims paid to non HSE agencies made to date. Any queries from individuals should be directed to their employer.



		Funding applications received (19/05/2023)	Organisations processed for payment*	Percentage Processed
Cohort 1	Private Sector/Independent Nursing Homes and Hospices	447	446	99%+
Cohort 2	Eligible staff working on-site in Section 39 long-term residential care facilities for people with disabilities	80	63	85%
Cohort 3	Agency and Contractor roles working in the HSE	79	48	61%
Cohort 4	Health Care Support Assistants (also known as home help / home care / home support) contracted to the HSE	131	128	97%
	Total	737	685	93%

Cohort 3 Agency and Contractor packs were issued later as the HSE was awaiting clarification from the DOH in relation to this cohort. Contractors and agencies, due to the nature of services provided and large number of service locations covered, have more supporting evidence to compile and collate before submitting their application to the KOSI Portal.

The DOH acknowledge that there have been requests made from various organisations and individuals for inclusion within the eligible non-HSE and non-Section 38 cohorts. The cohorts and cohort criteria were prepared on foot of careful consideration by the Government and the Department has no mandate to expand the list of eligible cohorts or eligible cohort criteria, therefore the Departments position must remain.

The Government has expressed sincere gratitude to all healthcare workers for their efforts during what has been a challenging period for our health services. The Department appreciates that those who do not qualify for this particular payment may feel disappointed, and that they too have made a significant contribution to the State's response to the pandemic but it was a difficult decision to set the boundaries here.

I trust this clarifies and is of some assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Marie O'Sullivan
National HR