



An Roinn Sláinte
Department of Health

The Nursing Home Resident Safety Improvement Scheme (RSI Scheme)



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Introduction

A Resident Safety Improvement Scheme was announced by Minister Butler in December 2023 to improve infection prevention and fire safety in private and voluntary nursing homes. The Nursing Home Resident Safety Improvement (RSI) Scheme will provide funding towards structural works carried out in compliance with Regulation 27 (Protection against infection) and/or Regulation 28 (Fire precautions) of S.I. No. 415/2013 - Health Act 2007 (Care and Welfare of Residents in Designated Centres for Older People) Regulations 2013 (as amended). The scheme commenced on 1 January 2024 and the closing date for applications is 15 November 2024. Nursing homes which have previously carried out structural works covered under this scheme can claim the cost of these works if they were carried out from 1 January 2020 to the commencement of this scheme (1 January 2024) subject to fulfilling the application criteria. All works funded through this scheme must relate to improving compliance with Regulations 27 (Protection against infection) and Regulation 28 (Fire precautions).

The Department of Health is responsible for all policy matters in relation to the scheme and will provide oversight of the scheme. The Department of Health will report to the Minister of State with special responsibility for Mental Health and Older People on the operation and progress of the scheme.

The Health Service Executive (HSE) will administer the scheme. The National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF) will administer the application process and provide support and advice to the HSE. The HSE will make payments where appropriate under this scheme.

The scheme details will be published on a dedicated section of the HSE and NTPF websites.

Interpretation

In these scheme details the following expressions shall have the following meanings:

- **Allowable Costs** are costs that may be included in an application for support under the scheme. These costs are those that have been incurred by the nursing home during the period 1 January 2020 to 15 November 2024 to address areas of compliance to meet their obligations under Regulations 27 and 28 which require renovation of their nursing home.
- The **Total Maximum** of costs that can be claimed by an individual nursing home under this scheme is €25,000 during the Period.
- The **Period** is from 1 January 2020 to 15 November 2024.
- **Regulations 27 and 28** refer to Regulation 27 (Protection against infection) and Regulation 28 (Fire precautions) of S.I. No. 415/2013 - the Health Act 2007 (Care and Welfare of Residents in Designated Centres for Older People) Regulations 2013 (as amended).
- **Appropriate Professional Oversight** is used in the context of meeting compliance with Regulations 27 or 28.
 - All fire safety improvements should be implemented based on a fire safety assessment plan of the individual nursing home. The fire safety plan used must be up to date for current regulations. There is no need for each individual

claim to have a new fire assessment take place as long as there is a current up to date fire safety plan in place and the changes being implemented align to this plan. All structural improvements relating to fire safety must be certified by a competent fire safety professional.^{1 2}

- All structural works carried out for infection control measures should meet compliance under Regulation 27.
- **Permitted Works** include and are limited to:
 1. The installation of additional / sufficient clinical hand wash sinks that meet the required standard.
 2. The upgrading of sluice facilities within appropriate nursing homes.
 3. The upgrading of cleaner's room within the nursing home for the following items.
 - a. improving the ventilation within the cleaner's room,
 - b. the installation of a stainless-steel sink/wash hand basin within the cleaning room for hand sanitisation purposes.

¹ S.I. No. 635 of 2017 Health Act 2007 (Registration of Designated Centres) (Special Care Units) Regulations 2017 states that a competent person means person who possesses sufficient training, qualifications, experience and knowledge appropriate to a) the nature of the fire safety risk assessment, having regard to the size or hazards (or both) of the building to be assessed, and b) relevant health and safety requirements in relation to active and ongoing fire safety management.

² "What a provider should look for in a competent fire safety professional" is available from page 31 of *The Fire Safety Handbook - A guide for registered providers and staff* available at <https://www.hiqa.ie/sites/default/files/2021-02/Fire-Safety-Handbook-a-guide-for-providers-and-staff-of-designated-centres.pdf>

4. The installation of additional signage for infection control measures.
5. The installation of approved fire doors by a competent fire safety professional.
6. The provision of appropriate fire safety / firefighting equipment. i.e., fire extinguishers.
7. Funding to support the improvement of emergency lighting and fire alarm systems and installation by a competent fire safety professional.
8. The installation of appropriate fire safe fillings into holes created for essential wiring and plumbing facilities by a competent fire safety professional. i.e., fire resistant filling in holes created for internet cables.
9. Upgrade and/or repair works required to ensure the effective fire-resistant compartmentation of the building.
10. Reconfigurations required for Regulation 27 and 28 compliance e.g. laundry/kitchen/bedrooms/common areas.

Claims for structural works and reconfigurations of facilities to meet S.I. No. 293 of 2016 – Health Act 2007 (Care and Welfare of Residents in Designated Centres for Older People) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 are not covered under this scheme.

Scope

All applications are welcome from registered nursing home providers under the Resident Safety Improvement Scheme. In order to make an application, the registered provider applicant must be a nursing home as defined under section 2 of the Health (Nursing Homes) Act 1990. This vouched scheme is open to all operational voluntary and private nursing homes registered with the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) and the National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF) as of 1 January 2024, and in receipt of payment under the National Nursing Homes Support Scheme (NHSS) for the provision of long-term residential care services. Such centres owned and/or operated by the Health Service Executive and such centres which have entered into an arrangement with the HSE under section 38 of the Health Act 2004 are not eligible for this Resident Safety Improvement Scheme. The scheme is not open to nursing homes in receipt of either a Notice of Proposal to Cancel the Registration of a Designated Centre, or a Notice of Refusal to Renew the Registration of a Designated Centre from the Office of the Chief Inspector of Social Services (the Chief Inspector). Where the Notice of Proposal to Cancel the Registration of a Designated Centre, or the Notice of Refusal to Renew the Registration of a Designated Centre has been withdrawn then the registered provider may apply for the scheme.

Scheme Details

A registered provider applicant may make an application for assistance by submitting the relevant application form in respect of each individual nursing home to the NTPF to claim for vouched allowable costs incurred during the Period. If the registered provider of a nursing home is making multiple claims, these claims should be submitted in no more than two applications where possible e.g. one application for the period 2020-2023 and one application for the period 1 January 2024 to 15 of November 2024. All registered providers of nursing homes participating in RSI must consent to sharing of information in respect of their claims with the Department of Health and other Government agencies for the purpose of scheme reporting.

Applications received after the closing date of the 15 November 2024 will not be accepted, will be deemed ineligible and will not be processed by the NTPF or the HSE.

The NTPF will review the application and the supporting documentation.

On a quarterly basis, the HSE will pay to the nursing home any amount that it considers to be Allowable Costs.

A nursing home will not be paid more than the Total Maximum during the Period.

Other Government Schemes

Costs will not be allowable under this scheme where the nursing home has previously been reimbursed for those same costs under another Government support scheme in respect of the same Period. All registered providers of nursing homes participating in the RSI Scheme must consent to sharing of information in respect of their claims with other Government agencies for the purpose of compliance activity.

Procedure

- i All registered providers of nursing homes who wish to participate in the scheme must sign and complete the relevant application form.
- ii An application may be made in respect of the Period. The application form can be downloaded from the HSE or NTPF websites and must be signed by an authorised person on behalf of the nursing home and sent, with all supporting documentation, to the dedicated NTPF email address RSI@NTPF.ie
- iii All registered providers of nursing homes must provide the following with every application:
 - a) For retrospective works carried out between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2023, a valid invoice from the contractor who carried out the works which should contain the following information: payee's information, amount due, payment due date, invoice date, invoice number, tax reference number and a description of the goods or services purchased.
 - b) For new works to be completed between 1 January 2024 and 15 November 2024, a valid invoice from the contractor who carried out the works which should contain the following information: payee's information, amount due, payment due date, invoice date, invoice number, tax

reference number and a description of the goods or services purchased itemised under the permitted works categories.

- c) A self-declaration that all information provided is correct and accurate which can be provided by way of tick-box on the application form.
 - d) Consent to the HSE, NTPF, HIQA, Department of Health sharing information in relation to their application for verification, assessment or reporting purposes.
 - e) Evidence of the applicant's tax compliance on the date of payment.
- iv The NTPF will verify and validate every claim in accordance with the scheme rules and advise on the appropriate amount to be paid to each nursing home by the HSE.
- v The NTPF may, on a sample, and/or risk basis, carry out formal audits of claims made retrospectively and will be supported in this work by professional auditors. It will be necessary for the registered provider of the nursing home to be able to provide vouched evidence of expenditure in relation to Allowable Costs. Any expenditure that is not vouched will be repayable on demand, or otherwise recoverable as a contract debt. All records shall be kept by the registered providers of the nursing homes for a minimum period of 6 years.

- vi The HSE will process the scheme payments in a similar manner but separately to the normal monthly NHSS payment to the nursing home's bank account.
- vii The NTPF, HSE, or its agents may at any time review and verify any claims made under the scheme. The outcome of any such exercise may result in a change in any advice given by the NTPF hereunder, or a change in payments made or amounts due.
- viiiA registered provider of a nursing home may not, in respect of a particular period, claim assistance under the scheme and another Government scheme for which they are eligible to receive assistance to carry out Permitted Works. If any registered provider of a nursing home is paid assistance under the scheme and another scheme in respect of the same costs in the same period, then the amount paid under the scheme must be repaid immediately, in default of which any sums paid under the scheme may be recovered at the absolute discretion of the HSE, as a simple contract debt.
- ix All works claimed for and carried out under this scheme may be subject to inspection as required by the NTPF or HSE and this may involve the sharing of information on individual nursing homes between these organisations for verification processes and assessment of applications.

Process

- i. The NTPF will confirm receipt of the completed application form.
- ii. The NTPF will verify that the application form has been completed correctly.
- iii. The HSE will pay a maximum of €25,000 to a nursing home under the scheme in respect of their total claim(s).
- iv. The HSE will validate and process the payments in accordance with the HSE's own payment control procedures.
- v. The above process will be repeated for every application.
- vi. The HSE will publish details of all payments made to nursing homes under the scheme.
- vii. The HSE and NTPF will provide the Department of Health with information in relation to administration of the scheme including an itemised list of all capital/structural improvements implemented using the scheme, the total amounts allowed in respect of each Regulation, and the total amount allowed at nursing home level, the numbers of applications incomplete, the numbers of applications approved/declined, the number and value of payments made.
- viii. The scheme details in relation to its operation and uptake will be reported on by both the NTPF and the HSE as required by the Department of Health and the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform.

- ix. Following the receipt of sufficient data from the sector, the NTPF will review the cost data and may advise the Department of Health on any aspect of the scheme. The Department may require amendments to the scheme as deemed appropriate.

Noting the urgency of the situation and the significant pressure facing the sector and health system, it will be important to balance control, oversight and administrative burden in relation to this scheme.