



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,  
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,  
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4<sup>th</sup> May 2021

Deputy Cathal Crowe  
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Dear Deputy Crowe,

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: 19305/21**

*To ask the Minister for Health when normal services of an organisation (details supplied) such as day centres will resume.*

Details Supplied: Irish Wheelchair Association

**HSE Response**

In line with public health guidance, at the outset of the pandemic, adult day services, along with many other services, were significantly reduced to limit exposure to COVID-19.

The HSE acknowledges the impact and effects of the closure of day centres for adults with disabilities during the current COVID-19 pandemic and is fully cognisant of the stress this can cause to people with disabilities and their families.

To mitigate the difficulties, the HSE engaged with providers to ensure that where possible, some level of service was maintained, based on prioritising those with the greatest needs. In this respect, Providers continued to provide outreach supports to people in the greatest need.

While Day service locations closed in mid-March of 2020, service supports continued for day service recipients albeit in a different way. In that regard reports for June 2020 showed:-

- Almost 5,000 of these adults received a full 24/7 service which includes individualised supports
- A further 4,000 adults received face to face supports albeit at a reduced level (Covid safety)
- Of the 1,000 day service locations nationally, HSE funded day services continued to provide supports at almost 300 locations to support people who were in a priority category with families under significant pressure.

One of the core principles of day service supports is community inclusion and active citizenship. Whilst adults with disabilities attend a service location – generally this location acts as a hub and where possible supports are provided in the community and people are supported to access a whole range of community based services. The closing down of society and lack of access to the community led to the development of

new ways of working by the service provider sector, including a range of programmes focusing on mental health and wellbeing, physical exercise e.g. Yoga, Pilates etc. Adults in receipt of Rehabilitative Training in some instances had their normal daily programme delivered remotely so it was full service delivery for this group but by remote working.

The HSE worked closely with service providers through representative organisations such as the National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers, Disability Federation of Ireland and the Not for Profit Association and Inclusion Ireland, who represent people with intellectual disabilities and their families, to develop a Framework for the resumption of day services and a guidance document to support this.

Reference is drawn to the following HSE weblink which continues to provide updates and guidance for disability service providers.

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partner-resources/>

Attention is also drawn to the following important web links which provides up to date information resources in respect of covid: [www.hspc.ie](http://www.hspc.ie)

<https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/c36c85-covid-19-coronavirus/>

Day Service locations commenced reopening in August 2020 for all recipients of day services. Due to social distancing guidance the capacity in day service locations has been reduced and therefore the quantum of service provided to people that receive day services is reduced.

There are some locations that have been retained as COVID isolation units but funding has been provided for Service Providers to source temporary locations as replacements for the duration of COVID-19. Where day service locations are being used as isolation units, day service staff are providing outreach support to the service users that would usually attend these locations.

The Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) provides adult day services in most Community Healthcare Areas and they also provide some social and recreational services that do not fall within the scope of adult disability day service. The issues as outlined above, such as adherence to public health and social distancing guidance and resulting reduction in quantum of service provided to people that receive day services, also applied to the IWA as a Service Provider.

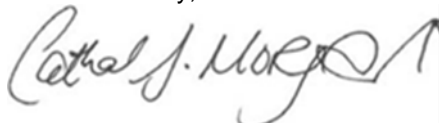
Since 2020/2021, Day Service resumption has been funded €30m in total, made up of a once-off allocation of €10m under the Covid heading and €20m to the core budget. This will fund 605 posts to enable Disability Day Services to re-open; almost 200 of these posts were filled in 2020 with the remaining posts due to be filled in 2021.

Currently almost 19,000 people are in receipt of disability Day Service supports at 1,041 locations around the country. These supports are provided by approximately 95 service provider agencies.

At the end of January, 2021, the National average quantum of support in day service locations was 51% and when remote supports were included, the quantum increased to over 60%.

The reported information is that although the quantum of service available to service users in locations remains at 51%, approximately 50% of service users have chosen not to attend at the location due to their own or their families COVID fears. Remote day service supports continue to be provided to service users while they are not attending at the location.

Yours sincerely,



**Dr. Cathal Morgan,**  
**Head of Operations - Disability Services,**  
**Community Operations**