

Minutes of Disability Consultative Committee (DCC) Meeting

Wednesday 1st July 2020, 10:00 a.m. via Microsoft Teams.

In attendance

Patsy Carr	Chair, Department of Health
Dave O' Connor	Department of Health
Michael Murchan,	Department of Health
Billy McCarthy,	Department of Health
Anne Melly	HSE
Mark O' Connor	Inclusion Ireland
Joanne McCarthy	DFI.
Una Nagle	Brothers of Charity
Geraldine Graydon	National Parents & Siblings Alliance /ASFAN
Dharragh Hunt	NDA
Tom Casey	DSG

Apologies: Alison Harnett, National Federation of Voluntary Bodies

1. Apologies were noted.

2 Minutes of meeting held on 19th May 2020 were adopted without amendment.

3. Covid 19 Disabilities Update.

The Department provided a short update. Circa 8,400 people are living in Disability Centres. There are 540 Laboratory confirmed cases of Covid 19; of the 20% of centres that are open, 19 centres are not permitting visitors due to Covid restrictions.

At the last meeting, it was reported that 14 deaths had occurred due to Covid 19 in Disability settings, HPSC data amended this figure to 13, infection control has been well managed across the Disability sector.

There was a discussion in relation to the resumption of respite, day and residential services and if the Chair could give an update in this regard

Discussions have been taking place in relation to the reopening respite and day services and the Chair stated that all services need to be re-imagined on resumption and that there is no one size fits all approach and solution.

Service providers will have to examine individuals' needs and priorities and determine what is person-centred for each individual. It will be very challenging to adhere to the social distancing guidelines as they stand and that Covid 19 is likely to be with us for the next 2 years or so.

HSE noted that a directive would issue in the coming week to 96 service providers throughout the country. When this guidance document has been signed off, the HSE should

be in a position to give an indication as to when day services may be able to resume. The aspiration will be that they will be resuming in September

- ✓ **Action: Chair to update committee on resumption of Disability services guidance received from HSE.**

Children's Disability Services

Mindful of the fact that children haven't been in School since March,2020, the DoH & Dept. of Education & Science (DES) have been in on-going discussions to organise a Summer Programme for children. Resulting from these discussions, the HSE plans to run summer camps around the country to support families in 96 locations throughout the country.

40 schools have made their premises available to the HSE to run these summer camps.

For children who are unable to attend these summer camps, there will be a programme run by the HSE to provide therapeutic supports to children and families in a day respite programme. It is envisaged that 1,200 children will avail of this programme. To enrol, applications should be submitted to the local Disability Manager as it is an HSE-led programme, applicants will be prioritised on a needs basis.

Brothers of Charity stated that there has been a lack of consultation with service providers in relation to schools and information about the summer programme. Service providers are getting the backlash from parents.

Inclusion Ireland stated that communication in the system needs to be better. There is a lot of frustration for families, some families are totally unaware of this programme and how to get one it.

Brothers of Charity suggested that the Covid 19 crisis has presented an ideal opportunity to roll out the personalised budget scheme.

Action: The Chair will feed back to the HSE on the lack of consultation and communication on the above programmes and she will revert to the committee on roll out dates for personalised budgets.

Mental Health Update.

Michael Murchan outlined that the resumption of Mental Health Services (MHS) will be in accordance with public health guidelines. The same challenges apply to MHS as those encountered by Disability Service - social distancing guidelines; a reduction from two metres to one metre if it comes about, would enhance capacity.

He said that there will be concentrated effort to try and restore face to face consultations as best as possible.

He added that 'Sharing the Vision' recently launched by Minister Jim Daly is the successor to 'A Vision for Change' There is a strong commitment at Ministerial and Government level to implementing this Report which can be downloaded online.

The Report will focus on the modernization of MHS and improving access to mainstream services. There will be a National implementation and monitoring team to oversee the

Report's 100 recommendations. Three recommendations (numbers 48, 73 and 92) relate to Disability and Mental Health Units.

Brothers of Charity inquired if Recommendation number 73 which relates to the Comprehensive Employment Strategy, was applicable to persons with a Dual diagnosis?

- ✓ **Action: Michael Murchan will check with HSE on recommendation 73 and revert to the Brothers of Charity.**

4. AOB.

Inclusion Ireland asked the Chair if clarity could be given as to the role of the new Minister for Children, Disability, Equality and Integration and if the disability budget would remain in health or in this new department with a senior minister for disability.

This information was unavailable, but it was hoped greater clarity would emerge following the appointment of Ministers for State in the coming week or so.

DFI asked if an update was available on the proposed 1% cut savings for Disability Service providers. The Chair stated that this matter was within the remit of Social Care Integration Unit, and would revert with an update.

- ✓ **Action: The Chair will follow up on the role of the new Minister and new Department and the proposed 1% Disability services cut with Ms Scally and inform the committee accordingly.**

Oireachtas Committee established to consider the State's response to the Covid-19 pandemic

The Chair stated that submissions have been invited from the Disability sector to the Special Committee on Covid-19 Response, submissions have also been sought from the DoH and the HSE.

Geraldine Graydon informed the committee that she had forwarded a submission to the Oireachtas Committee in relation to the planned Resumption of Special Education and the need to minimise the risk for children and staff.

This submission was available to the committee if required.

Next Meeting.

The next meeting to be arranged in due course, with relevant updates circulated by email on a regular basis.

