

Minutes of Disability Consultative Committee (DCC) Meeting

Wednesday 18th November 2020, 10:30 a.m. via Microsoft Teams.

In attendance

Patsy Carr	Chair, Department of Health
Dave O' Connor	Department of Health
Billy McCarthy,	Department of Health
Richard Quilliam	Dept of Children, Disability, Equality and Integration
Anne Melly	HSE
Alison Harnett	National Federation of Voluntary Bodies
Una Nagle	Brothers of Charity
Geraldine Graydon	National Parents & Siblings Alliance /ASFAN
Dharragh Hunt	NDA
Tom Casey	DSG

Apologies:

Apologies, Mark O' Connor, Inclusion Ireland.

1. Apologies were noted.

2 Minutes of meeting held on 1st July 2020 were adopted with amendments to reflect Joanne McCarthy's attendance and to record Alison Harnett's apologies for her unavailability.

3. Covid 19 Disabilities Update.

The meeting was informed that there had been a total of 152 outbreaks of Covid 19 in disability residential services and 766 Laboratory confirmed cases of Covid 19.

Sadly, there have been 15 deaths due to Covid 19 in Disability settings, one additional death reported in residential services did not occur in residential services

The Chair stated that great credit is due to service providers and their staff for rising to the challenges posed by Covid 19 in getting disability services up and running in what have been very challenging and restrictive circumstances.

Where Covid 19 updates become available, the Secretariat will continue to forward these to the committee to keep them updated.

The Chair informed the meeting of the Strengthening Disability Services Fund, which had been announced by the Minister on 30/10/2020. provides access to a total of €20 million in one-off grants to reform disability services, and to improve the quality of life for those who rely on these services.

A panel of assessors has been established by the HSE, to examine all applications for this funding and to prepare a report to Minister Rabbitte on the range of projects to be funded. The panel has been very impressed with the quality of applications submitted, with today (18th November) being the closing date for receipt of online applications.

Furthermore, additional funding of an extra €100 million has been secured by Ministers Donnelly and Rabbitte for disability services for next year as part of Budget 2021. The previously planned 1% efficiencies (€20 million) reduction to disability services has been removed, and will be reflected in the HSE's 2021 National Service Plan.

4 Day Services Update, Anne Melly HSE

HSE reported that day service supports continued to be provided to service users on a prioritised basis in March to May, the majority of supports were provided remotely, via – WhatsApp, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc.

Circa 1,500-day service staff were redeployed to support residential services.

Approx. 4,000-day service users were also in receipt of residential services and continued to be supported 24 /7, they were also receiving face to face supports during this period with significantly reduced hours per week.

Approx. 900-day service users were receiving supports at a day service location during this period. (High Priority).

June was targeted for the reopening of day service locations. Communication was issued to service providers for service resumption at a reduced service level.

In July, families received a communication informing them that service providers would be in touch with them to discuss resumption plans for their son/daughter.

In August, a portal uploaded on website with resumption dates for all day service locations nationally.

In September, day service locations continued reopening and 2020 school leavers commenced phasing into day services. €5m was allocated on a once-off basis to support service resumption. This was targeted at acquiring additional space, refurbishing buildings and providing transport solutions so that the overall amount of service for those living at home could be increased.

In October, data collected from all CHOs indicated that on average, circa 40% service level had been restored throughout the country.

€7.5m has been allocated to fund 605 posts nationally for a three-month period to enable all day service staff that had been redeployed to residential services to return to day service locations. The repatriation of day service staff will increase the service provision for those service users that live at home with their families. Service providers actively recruiting staff and identifying additional space in order to increase the service quantum.

It is hoped that the additional funding notified in September and October will increase the service provision for circa 14,500 service users from 40 to 60 %, this will be evident for service users and families early in 2021.

5. Update on United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and consultation process

Richard Quilliam, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) reported that the Draft report had been circulated to all Departments in March. It is closely aligned to the National Disability Inclusion Strategy (NDIS) and almost ready for publication pending sign-off within his Department.

The intention was to have meaningful and proper consultation with as many key groups as possible but the consultation process was severely hampered and impacted by Covid 19. In response to a query from the National Parents & Siblings Alliance /ASFAN member inquiring about proposals to consult people and family members who are not in AsIam or in other groups that he mentioned, he stated that the final process will be to consult as many groups as possible over the next six weeks and that it is open to anybody to make their views known by way of a submission. It is recognised that a lot of people are marginalised and are not represented by key groups and these people need to be given as much time as possible to have their say and input.

The NDA asked if there was anything in the pipeline as a successor to the NDIS and the UNCRPD going forward?

Richard stated that he would schedule a meeting with the NDA & Linda O' Sullivan to discuss a tranche of work carried out by the NDA in conjunction with the UNCRPD final report.

6 Update on move to DCEDIY.

The Chair informed the meeting that work is on-going for the move and that a number of legislative changes may be required for the transfer of functions to give effect to the move.

It is envisaged that reporting and governance arrangements for HSE disability services will move to the new Department.

A project team within the Department of Health (led by Resources Division) is responsible for the reconfiguration of Disability Services Unit and in transferring its functions to the DCEDIY.

7. AOB.

The Chair reported that to date, 90 people have transitioned from congregated settings and that a further 30 are expected to move by the end of the year.

She stated that visiting guidelines to residential settings have evolved in accordance with the applicable restrictions, some have been tailored to meet the needs of people with disabilities. She added that all residents should be entitled to a visit on compassionate grounds but that the overall aim is to determine if there is a transmission risk posed by visitations.

Any updates will be communicated to the committee going forward.

Next Meeting.

The next meeting will be arranged following the NDIS Steering Group meeting taking place in December. Mid- February tentatively, an exact date will be communicated to the committee after the Steering Group meeting.