

National Nursing Pilot for Children with Complex Healthcare Needs

Information for Healthcare Workers

Introduction

The HSE provides public health services in hospitals and communities across the country, including the provision of nursing supports to children to allow them to attend school.

Under a Government pilot to support children with complex healthcare needs to attend school, it is proposed to extend the care hours delivered by HSE-funded Paediatric Home Care Packages (PHCPs) into the school setting. This will be available to children already in receipt of 20 or more home nursing hours per week, which must include some hours that are delivered through a PHCP funded by HSE Primary Care.

Many schools, in particular special schools, currently have nurses on site funded through a variety of arrangements. The pilot service will not displace existing nursing services or supports in schools.

The pilot will be led by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE). The pilot is to be evaluated and the outcome will inform the provision of nursing support for students with complex healthcare needs into the future.

Overview of the Programme

This will be a nationwide pilot scheme, with applications accepted from recognised schools (i.e. schools with a roll number).

HSE Primary Care provides a home nursing service to children that have healthcare and/or nursing needs that cannot be met by standard Primary Care services and social services. This home nursing service is delivered through an individual Paediatric Home Care Package (PHCP), involving the provision of a contracted number of hours by a preferred private healthcare providers (“Preferred Providers”) procured by the HSE through a framework contract.



The pilot nursing scheme will, for eligible students and schools, extend the PHCP from the home into the school setting. This will allow a Preferred Provider nurse attend school with the student for an agreed number of hours per week, and travel to and from school with them, if necessary.

An application and assessment process will confirm the eligibility of the student for the scheme, determine the number of hours to support the student, assess any necessary environmental changes, and confirm whether funding is available for their nursing support hours. A transition and ongoing review process will facilitate the student's transition into school and monitor their progress.

Overview of Healthcare Role

HSE Key Workers play a central role in the provision of nursing supports to children through PHCPs, and managing the relationship with parent(s)/guardian(s) and preferred private healthcare providers. HSE Key Workers will play a role in raising awareness among families about the pilot scheme and considering the appropriateness of the scheme for children with complex healthcare needs.

When a child is approved for nursing support under the scheme, the HSE will procure the nursing support from a preferred provider, which is a private healthcare provider accepted onto a HSE purchasing framework.

Preferred providers recruit competent registered nurses to deliver the direct care to children with complex healthcare needs under the supervision of the preferred provider nurse manager, who directly liaises with the HSE Key Worker. Under the PHCP, clinical governance is held by the preferred provider. The HSE Directors of Public Health Nursing (DPHNs)/service managers have an ongoing role in the monitoring of the governance of services provided under the PHCP arrangement.

How is an application made?

Applications for the scheme are made by the school in which the student is enrolled. The school must have the consent of the parent(s)/guardian(s) before making an application.

The school will contact the HSE Key Worker for information to support the application.



Should the application meet the eligibility criteria, the HSE Key Worker will support planning for nursing support by:

- Completing an updated assessment of the child's case using the PCAT tool (Paediatric Community Assessment Tool)
- Arranging for a HSE school risk assessment to be carried out
- Attending and supporting planning meetings

Following approval of plan, the HSE Key Worker will procure the nursing support from a preferred provider.

Who is eligible to apply under the pilot scheme?

For an application for nursing support to be eligible under the pilot scheme, the following conditions will be applied. The following conditions must be met:

1. The child is enrolled in a recognised school
2. The child requires nursing support in order to attend school as determined by a clinical team
3. The child is currently in receipt 20 or more hours per week home nursing support which must include some hours that are delivered through a Paediatric Home Care Package funded by HSE Primary Care.



Other conditions/constraints are:

4. A child in receipt of 20 or more nursing hours per week which is totally or partially funded by HSE Primary Care, that has attended school within the previous 12 months and, at the time, had sufficient support to allow them attend, is not eligible for nursing support under this scheme
5. In the case of a student transferring or transitioning from one school to another, a new application is to be made by the new school and the eligibility criteria will apply to the new application. Condition #4 will not apply in this case.

It is seen as essential that existing levels of nursing support provided in schools are maintained in addition to the nursing support provided under the pilot scheme. For an application for nursing support to be eligible under the pilot scheme, the following condition must be met by the school:

6. A school applying under the scheme is required to demonstrate that, at the time of the application, the provision of nursing support by the school has not declined compared to the nursing support provided by the school 12 months previously. Where a decline has taken place, NCSE will not consider an application from the school until such time as the nursing support levels have been restored. Following the restoration of nursing support levels, if the school determines that the available nursing support is not sufficient/appropriate to meet the student's complex healthcare needs, NCSE will then consider a new application from the school.

Communications and support

Communications with schools in relation to the pilot scheme will be coordinated by a single point of contact available at NursingSupport@NCSE.ie, or the local SENO at relevant stages in the process. For SENO contact information, please consult [the relevant page on the NCSE website](#).