

Client: Nursing Homes Ireland
Source: The Irish Examiner
Date: 12/10/2022
Page: 4
Reach: 27589
Value: 6929.2800

Nursing home staff awaiting Covid payment hand in letters of protest

Niamh Griffin
Health Correspondent

Over 2,000 letters of protest have been handed to the Department of Health from nursing home staff who are still waiting for their pandemic bonus.

A bonus payment of €1,000 was announced for all healthcare staff in January but 40,000 staff in private and voluntary homes are still waiting, along with thousands working in other areas as healthcare assistants, cleaners, social care assistants, porters and security staff.

The HSE has tendered for a private agency to make the payments, as these workers are not on the HSE payroll, but payment dates are not yet available.

Nursing Homes Ireland planned to send 1,000 letters of protest from private and voluntary homes, but instead received over 2,000 responses.

One of the protest letters said: "During an outbreak, I worked 12 days in a row to alleviate the loneliness of residents confined to their rooms. I didn't get to see my children or grandchildren for fear of bringing it to them. Please tell me why I have not received the €1,000 that other healthcare workers have received. I worked every day of Covid—just like them."

A number of the letters highlighted the stresses of working under tragic circumstances.

"I looked after and was in daily contact with a number of elderly residents with the virus who suffered terrible symptoms," wrote a nurse

in a Waterford home. "Very sadly, some of these residents lost their lives. I worked overtime to replace colleagues who tested positive for the virus and had to self-isolate."

"I had to work under highly stressful and dangerous conditions for 11 months before I could receive the vaccine."

Another healthcare assistant wrote of their deep hurt at the delay, saying: "Watching people you've looked after die before your eyes. Coming home from a 12-hour shift and putting my family at risk. Barely seeing my family for two years. Not to mention the emotional and mental torture it has done to us. Nursing homes were left alone."

A nurse in a Co Louth home wrote: "We worked long hours, long days and long nights, under strain and tears and with staff reduced. This was to beat this virus and protect our residents. The response was to give us a clap and give us a cheer."

Nursing Homes Ireland chief executive Tadhg Daly said people wrote of their immense frustration, anger and distress at the delays, and said the general feeling from the letters is that people feel disrespected by the State.

"The sacrifices undertaken by staff in nursing homes were phenomenal and immense," he said.

"Yet the promised recognition has been considerably soured when we are nine months down the road and it is still to be paid to staff from private and voluntary nursing homes."

Mr Daly also criticised the delay in realising a tender



Client: Nursing Homes Ireland
Source: The Irish Examiner
Date: 12/10/2022
Page: 4
Reach: 27589
Value: 6929.2800



Sr Mary Ward of Marymount Care Centre with staff from private and voluntary nursing homes throughout the country, at the Department of Health. Nine months after it was announced by Government, staff from the private and voluntary nursing home sector are still to receive the Covid 19 Pandemic Payment. Picture: Colin Keegan



Darraglynn Nursing Home chef Jim O'Brien and Dominika Lewicka and Catherine Shallow of Marymount Care Centre, deliver letters.