

**SNA Temporary Reassignments  
Frequently Asked Questions  
Last updated 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020**

Read the Department of Education and Skills circular [HERE](#).

**Can I volunteer for other assignments?**

We are aware that many SNAs want to volunteer to help during the coronavirus crisis. At the moment the PAS cannot facilitate public servants wishing to volunteer for other roles. Fórsa has made clear to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) and to the PAS that there are many SNAs who would be willing to take on other roles on a voluntary basis. This is under review at the moment.

**I have already applied to assist the HSE on a voluntary basis. Does this mean I cannot help?**

No. If you are one of the 40,000 plus who volunteered to help by working within the HSE you may still be able to assist. The HSE is prioritising volunteers with a lapsed recent professional registration. It will subsequently be in contact with everyone who volunteered. If you are selected you will be released to assist in the HSE.

**Will all SNAs be reassigned?**

No. Schools will designate SNAs as available for reassignment depending on the availability of work, SNAs may not be available for reassignment if they have already been asked to contribute to remote learning or other associated activities.

We don't know the number of staff required. The intention is to create a pool of staff who could assist with the alternative roles if required. We will update members once we have an estimate of the number of SNAs required.

**Does this process only apply to SNAs?**

No. All public service staff within the school can be reassigned, including SNAs and teachers if they are not engaged on essential work. Non-public service staff working in schools who are not paid by boards of management cannot be reassigned.

### **What other roles could be suggested in the future?**

Fórsa has been in discussions with the department about what roles would be appropriate for SNAs. The employer suggested some roles that were not appropriate to the skills and experience of most SNAs. This included the proposal that SNAs could provide hands-on nursing care in HSE elderly care services, including residential nursing homes and community healthcare settings. Fórsa advised that this role was not appropriate for SNAs who work with children and are not trained to provide nursing care.

Whilst some SNAs may want to volunteer to assist with this work, reassignment would require significant retraining and would have required SNAs to work in areas of very high risk with limited or no training in how to keep clients or themselves safe.

Another role considered was reassigning SNAs to clerical and administrative roles in the HSE and social protection. This was discounted due to the need to train staff who would have been unfamiliar with public service administrative procedures.

Fórsa has indicated to the department that, if other roles are suggested for SNAs, the union will assess them on a case by case basis.

### **Will I be reassigned to a new location?**

No. Although the PAS questionnaire asks all staff to list their preferred locations, it is not intended to reassign any SNA to a new work location. This is because the roles outlined can be done remotely.

### **Will I have to visit students in their home?**

Fórsa is seeking urgent clarification on this from the HSE, the briefing supplied indicates the role is to work remotely, with any one-to-one contact taking place in an HSE centre.

### **Who will provide the teaching learning resources?**

We are awaiting confirmation of this. Schools, the NCSE and the department all have a part to play in supplying materials to assist with working remotely with students.

### **Could I be asked to work with young people or adults in disability services?**

The clear priority will be to work with your assigned students. Where this is not possible, the same work would be carried out remotely with young people or possibly adult clients and their families. Such clients will need advice on, and assistance with, the effects of staying at home and disruption to their normal routine and loss of outside contact. Even when working remotely, SNAs could be of help to young people, adults and their families during this difficult time.

The HSE may require SNAs to provide advice on how disabled clients and their families can access essential services. In these cases, HSE disability teams will supply an information pack for this purpose.

### **When will these reassignments be put in place?**

We expect the process of identifying staff to commence this week with the aim of concluding the process by 7<sup>th</sup> April. SNAs will need to be Garda vetted for a second time to comply with HSE regulations. This vetting will be processed by TTM Healthcare, a company that supplies agency staff to the HSE. The process of Garda vetting will take at least a week and possibly longer. Therefore SNAs are likely to be assigned to disability services after the Easter school holidays have concluded.

### **Can I be reassigned if I am self-isolating?**

No. If you are self-isolating on advice from your GP or the HSE you are not liable for reassignment. But you must complete a self-certification form. You will find one at the end of [circular 0024/2020](#) and at the end of [circular 0025/2020](#).

### **Can I be reassigned if I am sick or have tested positive for coronavirus**

No. If you are unwell or have contracted the virus you are not liable for reassignment.

### **Can I be reassigned if I have to care for children or other dependants in the home?**

As the work during the reassignment can be completed from home, SNAs can be asked to participate in this process if they have caring responsibilities at home. Clearly there will be a need to balance any work commitments with caring responsibilities. This approach was set out by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in its [advice to public service employers](#).

### **How can Fórsa support me during this process?**

Members will be supported throughout this process by their union. Fórsa will be able to intervene to resolve problems directly if inappropriate work is assigned to an SNA.

### **Who can I talk to about this process?**

You can contact your branch representative in the first instance, you can also email Fórsa through the [Contact Us](#) on our website. A member of staff will respond.

### **Where can I find more information on this process?**

Fórsa will be updating these FAQs over the coming days. Updates will be posted on our website and sent on to members via email. You should also check the [education department's website](#) and [www.Gov.ie](http://www.Gov.ie) for accurate information on the measures deployed against the spread of Covid-19.