



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,  
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,  
31-33 Sráid Chaitríona, Luimneach.

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16<sup>th</sup> December 2019

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Dear Deputy McLoughlin

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the following parliamentary question, which was submitted to this department for response.

#### **PQ 51183/19**

*To ask the Minister for Health if his attention has been drawn to the fact that the HSE and service providers offering home sharing to persons with intellectual disabilities, physical and sensory disability and or autism do so in the absence of legislation protecting the service; if his attention has been further drawn to the fact that in the absence of legislation and regulations professionals are also vulnerable in relation to the monitoring and safeguarding of persons in such arrangements; his plans to address the situation; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

#### **HSE Response**

##### **Home Sharing**

Home Sharing in intellectual disability (ID) services has been an alternative option to the traditional residential and respite care offered to people with intellectual disability and their families for many years. It is held internationally, nationally and indeed from the experience of intellectual disability service providers in Ireland that there are many advantages to Home Sharing. As a model of support, it has been developed and fostered by the National Home-sharing and Short-breaks Network (NHSN) which was established to promote uniformity and high standards amongst disability service providers throughout Ireland.

A National Expert Group including healthcare professionals, representatives from the HSE, TUSLA, Federation of Voluntary Bodies, CEOs from the non-statutory sector service providers and members from the National Home-sharing and Short-breaks Network (NHSN) was established to review the service. Their report, *'Home Sharing in Intellectual Disability Services in Ireland'* was published in 2016.

The report identified a total of twenty one (21) Home Sharing schemes operating in Ireland. They are primarily funded by the HSE and co-ordinated, governed and managed by non-statutory service providers.

Home Sharing in Ireland was being delivered to 770 people with intellectual disability (486 adults and 284 children) in 2016 with a total of 75,672 overnight respite breaks provided to people with intellectual disability through Home Sharing for the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015.

### **Developing Home Sharing Further**

While regulation in the area of Home Share is a key concern for the HSE, the introduction of legislation is a matter for the Government. The HSE recognises the advantages of Home Sharing, however there are strategic and operational challenges in the delivery of this model of support within an Irish context. The report provides the blueprint for resolving these issues and an implementation plan to progress the work of the National Expert Group on Home Sharing is being devised. In this context, each CHO Area was allocated funding in order to introduce/strengthen the Home Sharing model in their local area and to establish contract arrangements with Service Providers and Host Families.

Yours sincerely,



**Dr. Cathal Morgan,  
Head of Operations - Disability Services,  
Community Operations**