

1st October 2019

Deputy Michael Healy-Rae,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2.

PQ 37989/19 – St. John of Gods

“To ask the Minister for Health if he will address a matter (details supplied) regarding funding; and if he will make a statement on the matter”.

Details supplied: “Minister recently I met with representatives of St John Of God Services in Tralee, Co Kerry to discuss the funding crisis in the disability services sector in Co Kerry. We have a long waiting list for childrens disability supports, we have a shortage of residential support. Many parents are providing support into their 70s and 80s and beyond. There is significant need for respite and minimal capital and multi-disciplinary support funding has been provided for day care services since 2008. There is insufficient multi-disciplinary support and services are relying on an aging transport fleet.”

Dear Deputy Healy-Rae,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Disability Services Cork Kerry Community Healthcare has experienced difficulty in meeting increased levels of need in the past number of years in relation to the requirement for service provision for people with intellectual disabilities across the region.

It is important to note that Cork Kerry Community Healthcare continues to receive a large volume of applications for funding of supports on an on-going basis. The known level of need currently exceeds the funding available, hence, every application is considered in the context of the limited resources available, the large volume of emergency cases availing of our services and the complexities of the cases being addressed at present.

Children’s Disability Supports

The Kerry Intervention & Disability Services (KIDS) teams operate throughout Kerry in line with the national the Progressing Disability Services model providing services for children with disability and complex needs requiring the services of an inter-disciplinary team. There is currently a service gap between children that do not meet the access criteria for the complex KIDS Teams in Kerry but still require an assessment for ASD. The full rollout of the access criteria will deliver a solution for these children. An access group has been established in order to progress rollout of this policy in 2019. In the interim, we are reviewing options in order to respond to this unmet need in the Kerry Services.

Residential Services

In 2019 an allocation of €1.67m was received for the management of emergency cases in the region. This allocation is being utilised to meet urgent crisis needs for residential care, for additional home

supports as an alternative to residential care, or to provide additional supports where people in residential care have increased needs and cannot continue to be supported within that setting with the current level of supports. Unfortunately this level of funding does not enable service providers to meet all of the needs presenting in 2019. This deficit reflects the growing population of people with disabilities, longer life expectancy and more complex needs presenting, along with the lack of structured investment in residential and home supports over a number of years.

All requests for emergency funding are recorded and managed through a system called the Disability Support Application Management Tool, which serves to ensure that the application process is equitable and transparent. The process that follows involves a prioritisation by of the applications for approval based on the funding available and the complexity of the cases presenting, within the resources available.

Currently, and for the past number of years, the funding available within Cork Kerry Community Healthcare only allows for the management of crisis cases. In 2017, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare established a Residential Services Placement Committee in line with national policy. This committee has representatives from both Cork Kerry Community Healthcare and the voluntary organisations. The purpose of the committee is to work in partnership to respond to the growing needs within the services for residential placements. Through this committee a piece of work has commenced and is progressing in terms of developing a Multi Annual Plan for Residential and Respite Services. While funding is not available at this time to implement this plan, this work will ensure that Cork Kerry Community Healthcare are prepared to respond to any additional funding that becomes available in 2019 and subsequent years.

Respite Services

The expansion of respite services for people with disabilities is recognised as essential to enable families to continue to care for individuals with disabilities and in particular those with significant disabilities.

In 2018 the Government provided €10m in additional funding for a Respite Development Programme. The portion of this funding allocated to Cork Kerry Community Healthcare was used to open a respite facility in Kilmorna, North Kerry on a full time basis.

A referral committee was established with representatives from two of the key providers, one additional provider and the HSE. There are clear policies and guideline in place to ensure equity of access to this service. Adults may be referred to the service through self-referral, family representatives, general practitioners, health and social care professionals, hospitals, or case managers. All referrals are to be made through the agency currently providing a service to the applicant. In situations where there is no service provider involved the referral will be made through the relevant case manager for the HSE disability service. The Kilmorna house opened on a phased basis from the end of March 2018 and is operating at full capacity since the beginning of July 2018 which gives 1460 bed nights per year. This has been a very positive addition to meet the needs of adults in Kerry.

Transport, Aging Fleet & Multidisciplinary Supports

It is our position that the provision of transport is a matter for the Department of Transport. Disability Services Cork Kerry Community Healthcare is provided with limited funding for the provision of health services to the large numbers of adults and children who need them in our region. There is no capacity in our funding allocations to respond to transport needs of individual accessing Disability Services. It is regretful that transport cannot be addressed within the provision of services to the people that need them however, all efforts are being pursued to ensure that the resources available to

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare are being utilised efficiently and maximised to the benefit of the people we support.

In relation to the aging fleet & the need for multidisciplinary supports mentioned in your request I wish to advise that the associated funding requirements are national issues and therefore cannot be provided without national approval.

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare are acutely aware of the pressure experienced by many families and we are working with service providers and with the HSE at national level to ensure that the needs in this area continue to be highlighted in the Estimates and budget planning process.

Our Disability Services staff fully appreciate the level of stress that families are experiencing due to the lack of full time residential provision. I can assure you that we will continue to identify and highlight the needs for residential and respite services in this area. I regret that I cannot give you a more positive answer at this stage.

I trust this clarifies the situation for you.

Yours sincerely,



Ms. Jackie Daly,
General Manager for Disability Services,
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare