



Ms Niamh Smyth T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2

30th September 2019

**Re: PQ ref 38590/19 - DSPQ19127 - Resources Early Intervention, Respite,
Residential Services for persons with Disabilities**

Details

To ask the Minister for Health the measures he is taking regarding the crisis with the lack of resources in early intervention, adequate respite services and a lack of residential spaces for persons with disabilities in counties Cavan and Monaghan; and if he will make a statement on the matter. - Niamh Smyth

Dear Deputy Smyth,

I refer to your recent correspondence in relation to Resources for Early Intervention, Respite and Residential Services for persons with Disabilities. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position;

Early Intervention

I can advise that at present there are 423 children requiring services across Cavan and Monaghan. Due to the on-going complexity of cases presenting to the service, the team are having to provide more intervention and support to families, schools and pre-schools to meet the needs of these children.

Both teams work to the national access criteria, prioritising urgent referrals, and where possible, prioritising those children who are referred in to us after the age of 5years 4months, as they are then transferred back to HSE services at 6 years of age.

In an attempt to manage the increased waiting times for families, we are currently running a pilot project in Cavan where we are offering two parent training sessions for families on the waiting list, the sessions include:

1. The Importance of Play in Early Childhood Development
2. Enhancing Speech and Language Communication Development at Home.

This initiative will be reviewed and feedback sought from families, in order to ascertain if this is an effective use of resources to manage the waiting list, and if so, the plan would be to roll this out across both services. Families from both Cavan and Monaghan services have been invited to attend the pilot project in Cavan.

Other initiatives include:

- Targeted support, i.e. 1-2 sessions with a family, i.e. to support behaviour management / setting up visual schedules.
- Informing families on the waiting list of community based programmes i.e. Parents Plus; HSE PCT parent training.
- To consider offering parents on the waiting list a place on our Parent Plus training programme if and when we are running same.

We have had some difficulty in recruitment and retention of therapy posts, predominantly due to the pay differential between Section 39 agencies and HSE/Section 38 agencies. Geographically, Cavan and Monaghan are not particularly commutable from the likes of Dublin or near surrounds, and therefore are not that attractive to people living outside the area.

Respite Services

I can advise that Annalee View House Respite Centre, Cavan, is a 5 bed Centre which caters for both adults and children with moderate to severe intellectual disability and associated medical conditions, autism.

Adult and Child service users avail of respite on alternate weeks, 26 weeks adult respite, 26 weeks child respite.

Unfortunately, due to an environmental issue at this Centre we are unable to facilitate respite at this time, consequently, a new proposed property for respite in Cavan Town has been identified.

Every effort is being made to support families as best as possible. Joint working is currently active between Annalee Service and the second respite service for Adults with an Intellectual Disability within Cavan Monaghan, Steadfast House, Carrickmacross, Co Monaghan, to provide overnight respite to individuals as soon as possible.

Cavan Monaghan Disability Services currently offer a day service at the weekends for children and adults. Additional Home Support is available upon request and alternative respite is been explored.

In relation to the new proposed property for Respite in Cavan Town, HSE Estates has signed off the Property Transaction Application Form. This has been signed by the by the Property Review Group.

All documentation for the new proposed property was submitted to HIQA on 14th June 2019 and HIQA visited the site in July 2019. We are now waiting for confirmation of registration from HIQA.

Steadfast House Respite Centre, Carrickmacross, is currently facilitating service users from Annalee View Respite Centre in Cootehill during their closure. Presently child and adult service users are availing of respite day care at weekend periods. Some adult service users are also availing of respite in Steadfast House Respite Centre, which provides respite to adults with an intellectual and/or physical/sensory disability in Cavan and Monaghan. The maximum capacity within the Respite Service is 4 beds per night. On average, the service is operating at 3 weeks per month with one week closed. As per Service Level Arrangement with the Health Service Executive, Steadfast House Respite Centre provides 840 respite bed nights per annum.

St Christopher's Centre, Cavan, provides respite services for people with physical, sensory and intellectual disability 365 days a year. St Christopher's has two respite beds. This equates to 730 respite bed nights available in St Christopher's Centre, Cavan, per year. I have been advised that operational capacity for St Christopher's Centre at present is operating as normal.

Residential Services

I can advise that currently Disability Services provide residential care to 125 persons with an intellectual disability across the Cavan/Monaghan area. The development of a residential unit can cost in the region of €900,000 to €1,000,000 and currently our annual budget received from government does not encompass a further new development. However this issue is always on our agenda and service development.

I trust this information is of assistance to you but should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Geraldine Cosgrove
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