

12th August 2020

Deputy Thomas Gould
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2.

PQ 19476/20

“To ask the Minister for Health the number of respite hours provided to families in north central areas of County Cork over each of the past 12 months; the number provided in each month since March 2020; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”

Dear Deputy Gould,

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.

I wish to advise you that Disability Services Cork Kerry Community Healthcare has a North Lee and a Cork North area. We do not have a Cork North Central as our areas are not aligned with political constituency maps. For the purposes of this response the information enclosed relates to both Cork North and North Lee.

Respite services in Cork North/ North Lee are currently provided by COPE Foundation, St. Joseph's Foundation and Cork Association for Autism. In reference to your query regarding the number of respite hours provided to families in Cork, the information you have requested is captured through the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) process. Disability Services Cork Kerry Community Healthcare currently tracks persons in receipt of respite services, not hours, and does not differentiate between Child, Adolescent or Adult. Furthermore, it is not broken down by overnight respite, day respite or alternative respite provided.

The following data has been provided to us by 3 agencies:

Month	Number of People in receipt of Respite Services
July 2019 – July 2020	3133
4 month breakdown	
March 2020	350
April 2020	0
May 2020	0
June 2020	276

It is important to note, 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 residential respite services for adults and children with intellectual disabilities. 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 HSE

received funding of €10 million to support respite services. This funding was subsequently allocated to each Community Health Organisation to develop respite and alternative respite models of service. Cork Kerry Community Healthcare utilised the funding received to progress the development of regional respite houses in Kerry and Cork along with a number of alternative respite services across Cork and Kerry.

Regrettably, due to Covid19 crisis, many services such as Respite Services across Cork and Kerry were severely impacted and resulted in either services ceasing operations on a temporary basis or services being offered in an alternative way to endeavour to support clients and families presenting with the highest risk.

It is important to note that the Covid19 crisis has impacted on the way in which services are currently delivered. The Disability Services have been working with our service providers to ensure the safe delivery of services as they resume, taking account of public health and infection control requirements. We are currently planning for reinstatement of services in line with the government roadmap on reopening the country along with the guidance from public health and infection control. The reinstatement requires extensive planning and needs to factor in the complexities and vulnerabilities of the people we support. This guidance will require services to be delivered differently to support people's needs taking account of the maximum capacity achievable within respite services to allow for continued social distancing measures to be observed within the challenges and restrictions arising from the presence of Covid19 in Ireland. As such, while planning for the resumption of services continues it is unlikely that there is capacity to increase respite service levels in the near future due to the complexity of respite services and the nature of how those services are delivered. Residential respite generally involves a number of clients coming from home to access the service. In light of Covid19 restrictions in many services, resumption will allow for only single occupancy which will impact on the ability of services to resume to pre-Covid19 levels in the near future. The Disability Services and service providers will engage with service users and their families to plan for these changes.

Disability Services is acutely aware that the Covid19 pandemic and cancellation of services has resulted in significant stressors being placed on families and individuals with disabilities across Cork Kerry Community Healthcare. We continue to engage with our Service Providers to ensure that where possible, some level of service is maintained, based on prioritising those with the greatest needs.

I trust this clarifies the situation for you.

Yours sincerely



**Ms. Jackie Daly,
Interim Head of Disability Services,
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare**