



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

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

Office of the Head of Operations,  
Disability Services/Community Operations,  
31-33 Catherine Street, Limerick.

T: 00353 (0) 61 483369

Suíomh Gréasáin/Website: <http://www.hse.ie>

8th December 2020

Deputy Alan Dillon,  
Dail Eireann,  
Leinster House, Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.  
e-mail: [alan.dillon@oireachtas.ie](mailto:alan.dillon@oireachtas.ie)

Dear Deputy Dillon,

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 38494/20**

*To ask the Minister for Health the assessment criteria for respite for school aged children with ASD; the funding allocated for this respite in 2020; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

#### **HSE Response.**

Respite can occur in a variety of settings for various lengths of time, depending on the needs of the individual service user, the family and according to available resources. Models of respite can be Centre based; In-Home; Home-to-Home and Family Support, etc. As a vital part of the continuum of services for families, respite potentially helps prevent out-of-home full-time residential placements, preserves the family unit, and supports family stability with the service users at the centre.

Allocation of respite hours is based on the individual's needs and circumstances. HSE Service Managers work with service users and their families as well as the Service Providers of respite services to ensure the provision of a client focused service, establish priority need and ensure best practice and maximisation of funding and other resources.

In 2020, Disability Services has been allocated c. €2 billion to provide a range of services throughout the country across all CHO Areas and is spent in line with nationally agreed policy for disability services, whilst at the same time endeavouring to maximise value. Services are provided according to need and include Residential and Respite Services, Day Services, PA and Home Support Services, and Therapeutic Supports.

Funding allocated to respite services is approximately 3% of the total funding allocated annually and this year it is approximately €70,677. There is no separate record of respite funding provision for school aged children with ASD as services are based on needs and requirements rather than diagnosis.

#### **Children's Disability Services**

The HSE acknowledges the challenges in meeting the demand for children's disability services and is acutely conscious of how this impacts on children and their families.

A number of service improvements are being introduced that, when implemented, will help improve access to services for children with disabilities and developmental delays. The overall programme of improvement is the ongoing roll out of Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People (PDS). This requires the reorganisation of all current HSE and HSE funded children's disability services into geographically-based CDNTs.

PDS is doing this by forming partnerships between all the disability organisations in an area and pooling their staff with expertise in the different types of disabilities to form the CDNTs. These teams will provide for all children with significant disability, regardless of their diagnosis, where they live or where they go to school.

The HSE is establishing a total of 91 Children's Disability Networks across each of the nine CHOs comprised of Specialist Inter-Disciplinary Teams to work with children with complex disability needs. Each Network will have a Children's Disability Network Manager with specialist expertise in providing children's disability clinical services. The appointment of these managers will facilitate the establishment of the Children's Disability Network Teams later this year.

This PDS reconfiguration and the elimination of AON backlogs will facilitate reconfigured teams to provide child and family centred services in line with the PDS model.

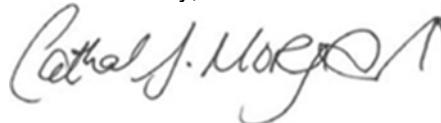
#### **Additional funding;**

The HSE and disability service providers recognise the critical need and importance of disability supports for people and their families. This includes respite care provision for school aged children with disabilities. The impact of COVID-19 on people's lives has and continues to be very significant. Our collective aim is to restore services and ensure continuity of services in a safe way and in line with the very significant investment made by the State and funded agencies.

In this context, we welcome the recent announcements from the Government of additional funding for Disability Services:

- An additional €100 million secured for Disability Services in the recent budget. The specific breakdown of this investment will be discussed as part of the normal service planning process and will be detailed in the National Service Plan. However, the HSE anticipates that significant funding will be allocated for the development of additional Respite Services.
- €10 million is being made available to support the resumption of day services and enhanced home support services for disability service users. The €10 million funding is being drawn down from the National Action Plan on COVID-19 - €7.5 million will increase the level of day service provision and €2.5 million will provide intensive support packages for children and young people with complex/high support needs.
- €20 million in one-off grants will be provided to reform disability services, build the capacity of disability organisations and to improve the quality of life of those who rely on these services.
- €7.8 million has been allocated by Sláintecare to facilitate the HSE and its funded service providers to address the overdue Assessments of Need

Yours sincerely,



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