



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,
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15th October 2020

Deputy Mattie McGrath
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: mattie.mcgrath@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy McGrath,

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 28400/20

To ask the Minister for Health when day and overnight respite sessions will recommence in each CHO in tabular form.

HSE Response

The HSE and its funded Agencies provide respite care to children and adults with disabilities. 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. Respite is not always centre-based and can be provided in a number of ways, e.g. Centre based; In-Home; Home-to-Home; 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.

The HSE is very much aware of the importance of respite service provision for the families of both children and adults with disabilities, including the impact the absence of respite service provision can have on other services.

2020 Developments

Prior to the public health emergency with regard to COVID-19 and in accordance with the National Service Plan 2020, the HSE was committed to provide 33,712 day only respite sessions and 166,183 nights (with or without day respite) to people with disabilities in 2020. In addition, the HSE will provide 144 intensive transitional support packages for children and young people with complex / high support needs, which will include planned residential respite interventions and access to planned extended day / weekend and summer day based activities.

The presence and threat of COVID-19 in Ireland has resulted in significant challenges for service providers, families and most importantly, people with disabilities. During these challenging times disability services and supports such as residential services, day services, home supports, Personal Assistant supports, respite services and children's services were either suspended or delivered in alternative ways in line with Public Health guidance. The HSE is aware that the changes in service delivery have resulted in significant stressors being placed on families and individuals with disabilities across Ireland.

The delivery of Respite Services continued to operate during the pandemic, albeit at a reduced capacity; some centres remained open, while others were temporarily re-purposed as isolation facilities. Throughout the pandemic, staff and resources associated with closed or curtailed services were redeployed where possible to support residential provision and to provide for targeted in-home, community and tele-/online supports for service users and families based on prioritised needs. The HSE was also mindful of the will and preference of people in terms of receiving services and in certain instances where personal choice was made to put these services on hold.

Resumption of Disability Services

In respect of the provision of Disability Services and in the context of the Governments Resilience & Recovery Framework (2020 – 2021), the HSE regards the provision of disability services including respite provision as essential to maintaining a response to people with a disability.

All disability services must follow public health guidance in this area, including the prevention and management of covid related infection. The HSE and its funded disability partners will continue to provide supports, including respite services, in line with public health guidance and direction and having regard to the availability of staffing resources.

Reference is drawn to the following HSE weblink which provides updates and guidance for disability service providers, including 'service resumption planning guidance'.

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partner-resources/>

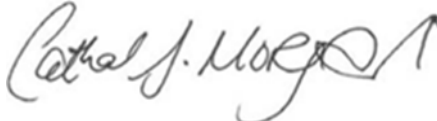
Attention is also drawn to the following important web links which provide up to date information resources in respect of COVID-19.

www.hspc.ie

<https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/c36c85-covid-19-coronavirus/>

The HSE and Service Providers recognise the critical need and importance of disability supports for people and their families. The impact of COVID-19 on people's lives has and continues to be very significant. Our collective aim is to restore services in a safe way and in line with the very significant investment made by the State and funded agencies and we will continue to work with service users and their families/carers to ensure that we achieve this aim.

Yours sincerely,



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