



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

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27th October 2020

Deputy Pauline Tully
Dail Eireann,
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Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
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Dear Deputy Tully

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 30089/20

To ask the Minister for Health the funding allocation for respite services in the Budgets in each of the years 2015 to 2018; the expenditure on respite services in the years 2016 to 2019; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

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.

Funding for respite services

On an annual basis, the HSE National Service Plan provides for a significant level of funding to deliver essential frontline services for people with a disability. These core services span a spectrum of essential interventions ranging from Clinical Therapeutic Supports, Rehabilitative Training / Day Services, Home Care Supports as well as Respite and Residential provision. This funding reflects an incremental increase in the provision of funding to the Disability service as follows;

2014: €1.4 billion
2015: €1.5 billion
2016: €1.6 billion
2017: €1.7 billion
2018: €1.8 billion
2019: €1.9 billion
2020: €2.0 billion

All funded services are required to deliver safe and effective services within a defined budget allocation. This allocation is spent in line with nationally agreed policy for disability services whilst at the same time maximizing value. The HSE must also ensure that it prioritises available resources on the basis of meeting the health and social needs of people with a disability.

The manner in which funding is allocated/distributed allows for a distinction between broad categories of funding such as services for older people, primary care and disabilities in general. Disability services are provided based on the needs of an individual rather than by the actual type of disability or service required. Funding allocated to respite services is not routinely collated and aggregated into a statistical profile. However, the Value for Money and Policy Review of the Disability Services, analysing 2009 activity, estimated that approximately 4% of the annual budget is spent on respite services each year.

In 2017 approximately €41.595m was spent on respite services whilst in 2018 approximately €54.1 million was spent on respite services.

In 2018, the Minister for Health announced an additional €10 million for the HSE, specifically to enhance respite care in the disability sector. The funding provided for the equivalent of 12 new Respite Houses, 1 in each CHO Area, and 3 in the Greater Dublin area. This resulted in an additional 6,455 bed nights delivered to 763 people.

Alternative respite in the form of summer camps, evening and Saturday clubs was also put in place, benefiting hundreds of adults and children. Community-Based, alternative respite projects delivered 15,144 'in home' Respite Hours, to 400 users and 1,296 Saturday/Evening/Holiday Club 'sessions' to 1,500 people.

In 2019 approximately €56 million was spent on respite services providing around 160,000 overnight respite and 36,000 day only respite sessions to over 6,000 people with a disability.

With regard to 2020, the HSE, in conjunction with Service Providers are currently working on service resumption plans and will have more information in respect of revised costs when that process is complete.

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

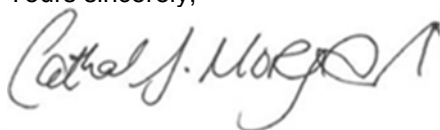
<https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/c36c85-covid-19-coronavirus/>

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.

Additional Funding

In addition, the HSE welcomes the announcement of 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 Letter of Determination from the Department of Health. However, the HSE anticipates that significant funding will be allocated to support Voluntary Service Providers.

Yours sincerely,



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