

13<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Deputy Neale Richmond,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Dublin 2.

**PQ Ref Number: 31589/20**

**“To ask the Minister for Health his plans to update the regional respite services provided by an organisation (details supplied) and increase service hours to the community; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”**

**Details Supplied: Brothers of Charity in Garretstown, Co. Cork)**

Dear Deputy Richmond,

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.

It is important to note that Cork Kerry Community Healthcare continues to receive a large volume of applications for funding of supports on an on-going basis. The known level of need currently exceeds the funding available, hence, every application is considered in the context of the limited resources available, the large volume of emergency cases availing of our services and the complexities of the cases being addressed at present.

In 2018, the HSE received funding of €10 million to support respite services across Ireland. This funding was subsequently allocated to each Community Health Organisation in the form of Provisional Respite Services and Alternative Respite Services. The funding allocated to Cork Kerry Community Healthcare has been utilised as follows:

**Respite House:**

Funding was provided for a new respite house in Kerry. This service is provided through Kerry Parents and Friends and is open to the entire County Kerry catchment area. The house opened on March 30th 2018.

In addition to the house in Kerry, a Regional Respite Service commenced in West Cork in December 2018. It opened on phased basis in 2019 and accepts referrals for respite across County Cork.

**Alternative Respite:**

In relation to alternative respite, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare received €220,000 for full year services in 2018, which will continue into 2019. Cork Kerry Community Healthcare Disability Services communicated with all organisations, in relation to priorities for their area. A number of proposals were approved for Alternative Respite Programmes with the Service Providers services including one programme for children and the remainder for adults. The programmes included:

- Saturday activities
- Social Clubs including outings, shopping etc.
- After work programmes

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare has established a Residential Placement Committee since April 2017 and this committee has representatives from Cork Kerry Community Healthcare and voluntary organisations. A sub-group of this committee was established, with a primary focus on planning for the future in respect of both residential and respite services. This group has focused on reviewing existing services and the level of need in order to use this information to plan locally for the future. While funding is not available at this time to implement this plan, this work will ensure that Cork Kerry Community Healthcare are prepared to respond to any additional funding that becomes available in 2021 and subsequent years. Regrettably, due to Covid 19 crisis, respite services across Cork and Kerry were severely impacted and resulted in some services ceasing operations completely or services being offered in an alternative way to endeavour to support clients and families presenting with the highest risk. Disability Services has recently been engaged with our Service Providers to plan for the phased resumption of services and the development of alternative models of service delivery.

It is important to note that the COVID-19 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 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. This guidance will require services to be delivered differently. The Disability Services and service providers will engage with service users and their families to plan for these changes. As such, while planning for the resumptions 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 Covid restrictions in many services resumption will allow for only single occupancy which will impact on the ability of services to resume to pre Covid levels in the near future.

Disability Services is acutely aware that the Covid pandemic and cancellation of services has resulted in significant stressors being placed on families and individuals with disabilities across Cork Kerry Community Healthcare. However, we do not have a timeline or schedule of when all services will resume. The planning for service resumption is being undertaken in line with public health guidance, infection control protocols and will be aligned with the Government roadmap to reopening the country.

With specific reference to Brothers of Charity Garrettstown Services in your question, this is a Registered Respite Centre for Adults funded for Summer Programme for groups and a small quantum of clients during the year. It provides short breaks on a regional basis over the summer months. The Manager/Person in Charge position is currently vacant and is under recruitment. There are 6 regular adult attendees who access this service and it was anticipated that the service would recommence on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2020 in line with Public Health advice as per pre Covid-19 arrangement. A decision regarding the annual regional respite service will be finalised when the manager post is recruited. During August plans were finalised to restore adult day services in so far as possible within current facilities and the reinstatement of the summer groups program was under development at that time. In light of the challenges of covid, reducing interactions, social distancing and the nature of the service regrettably the summer respite for 2020 did not proceed this year. However, others who use it for regular respite intervals are receiving their service.

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare are acutely aware of the pressure experienced by many families and we are working with service providers and with the HSE at national level to ensure that the needs in this area continue to be highlighted in the Estimates and budget planning process. I can assure you that we will continue to identify and highlight the needs for residential and respite services in this area

I trust this clarifies the situation for you.

Yours sincerely



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

