



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,  
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,  
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17<sup>th</sup> September 2020

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Dublin 2.  
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Dear Deputy Devlin,

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 22161/20

*To ask the Minister for Health if consideration will be given to the development of a national respite support scheme for children under six years of age living with a serious disability; and if not, if support will be provided to a foundation (details supplied) in order that it can expand its pilot programme.*

Details Supplied: to the Jack and Jill foundation

#### 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 Respite Developments

The need for increased respite facilities is acknowledged and the HSE continues to work with agencies to explore various ways of responding to this need. 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 committed to 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. To date in 2020, the Hse has put in place 210 intensive home support packages, including 89 packages developed in response to Covid-19.

In addition, the HSE supports the Jack & Jill Children's Foundation to provide in-home nursing care and respite support for children up to the age of five, who have a range of neurodevelopment issues including brain injury, genetic diagnosis and severe cerebral palsy. Jack and Jill care for many children who have undiagnosed conditions and provide end of life care for children under the age of 5, regardless of diagnosis.

The Jack & Jill Children's Foundation link and liaise with Public Health Nurses, GP's, Clinical Nurse Co-ordinators, Disability Teams, Hospitals, Hospices, Home Care Teams and Voluntary Organisations. They assist parents to organise and co-ordinate their home respite service, liaising and supporting the nurses and carers in the home.

The Jack and Jill Foundation are in receipt of €1,079,989 in funding from the HSE under S39 of the Health Act 2004. The organisation gives direct funding to families to enable them to purchase home respite care.

The HSE also supports the Children's Sunshine Home which services for children with life limiting conditions and their families by providing transitional care, home support, respite, crisis and end-of-life care. Services are available to children with high medical and nursing needs from birth to 18. The service works in partnership with the HSE and related voluntary agencies. The Children's Sunshine Home operates a multidisciplinary service that includes a Medical Director, Consultant Paediatrician, a nursing team and a range of allied health professionals. In 2011 Children's Sunshine Home opened LauraLynn House, Ireland's first children's hospice. Children's Sunshine Home is funded by the HSE under Section 38 of the Health Act. This agency is scheduled to receive funding of €3,825,850 in 2020.

### **Covid -19. Recovery Plan**

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, respite services were significantly reduced. A number of Respite Centres continued to operate during the pandemic, albeit at a reduced capacity; while others were and continue to be temporarily repurposed as isolation facilities.

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 as essential to maintaining a response to people with a disability, including Respite provision.

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 residential, including respite, and day 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'.

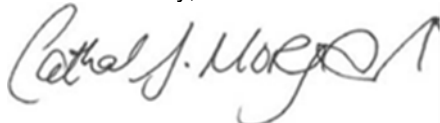
<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partner-resources/>

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

[www.hspc.ie](http://www.hspc.ie)

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

Yours sincerely,



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