



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

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

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9th April 2021

Deputy Claire Kerrane,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
e-mail: claire.kerrane@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Kerrane,

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 15976/21

To ask the Minister for Health the number of children aged under 18 years of age on waiting lists for respite by county; and the average length of time these children have been waiting for respite 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 and their family or carer, 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.

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.

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. The number of respite overnights operated at just over 50% of the NSP target for 2020; while the number of day only sessions operated at 62% of 2020 target. This was mainly due to necessary precautions to maintain physical distancing and to adhere to infection prevention and control requirements. 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.

With regard to respite provision, there is no centrally maintained waiting list for respite services, however the local HSE areas are aware of the need and requirements in their areas and work with the

local Service Providers with a view to responding to the level of presenting needs within the resources available.

Developments in 2021

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. In accordance with the National Service Plan 2021, the HSE will provide nine additional centre-based respite services, providing some 10,400 additional respite nights along with a range of alternative respite projects including Saturday clubs, breakaway schemes, and summer schemes. In addition, the HSE will provide 214 intensive respite support packages to children and young adults

Yours sincerely,



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