



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

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22nd November 2021

Deputy Marian Harkin,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: marian.harkin@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Harkin,

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 55064/21

To ask the Minister for Health the status of the progress being made in accordance with the HSE National Service Plan 2021 which commits to providing nine additional centre-based respite houses, one in each CHO and 10,400 additional respite nights; the number of respite days and respite nights provided in 2021; 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 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.

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

Unmet Need and growing demand

The provision of residential respite services has come under increasing pressure in the past couple of years due to a number of impacting factors such as,

- an increase in the number of children and adults who are seeking access to respite as a reflection of general population increase;
- increasing levels of complexity across the sector due to better and improved health care;
- an increase in the age of people with a disability resulting in people presenting with “changing needs”.

In addition, a significant number of respite beds have been utilised for long term residential placements due to the presenting complexity of the individual with a disability and also due to home circumstances, therefore, the numbers of people with disabilities in receipt of residential respite services and the corresponding number of respite nights has reduced when compared to previous activity.

A further impact to the delivery of respite has been in response to the regulation of service provision as set by the Health Information and Quality Authority regulatory and policy context. HIQA has established and set the way in which residential/respite services is provided requiring the Agencies comply with regulatory standards in order to meet regulation. Standards specify a requirement for personal and appropriate space impacting on the capacity and Statement of Purpose for a Designated Centre. This has had a direct impact on capacity where respite beds are no longer allowed within a residential setting e.g. vacated by residents who go home at weekends or for holidays, can no longer be used for respite. Implementation of the national policy on congregated settings (Time to Move on from Congregated Settings Policy) is also affecting capacity.

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.. 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.

The Table below provides details of the number of overnights and the number of day only respite sessions accessed by people with a disability in 2020 and to date (end of September) 2021.

CHO	No. of overnights (with or without day respite) accessed by people with a disability			No of day only respite sessions accessed by people with a disability	
	2020	2021 (up to Q3)		2,020	2021 (up to Q3)
National Total	87,177	66,894		21,032	11,120
CHO 1	3,604	4,130		2,457	798
CHO 2	24,814	19,964		5,711	3,332
CHO 3	7,446	6,451		2,184	1,364
CHO 4	9,629	7,765		1,465	790
CHO 5	6,128	3,782		3,394	2,415
CHO 6	6,716	4,869		348	392
CHO 7	8,979	7,226		1,218	533
CHO 8	10,729	9,451		1,872	1,239
CHO 9	9,132	3,256		2,383	257

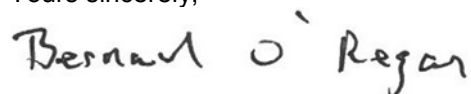
In 2021, the restoration and continuity of Respite Services is underway in a safe way and while services are now operational in all areas, there is reduced capacity due to necessary infection prevention and control requirements. The number of respite overnights operated at (66,894), 4.5% ahead of the target of 21,337; while the number of day only sessions operated at 11,120, -29.3% below the target of 15,722 for the first three quarters of the year. This was mainly due to necessary precautions to maintain physical distancing and to adhere to infection prevention and control requirements. Day Respite often accommodates larger groups than overnight respite and often takes place in a day centre on a Saturday (especially for children), therefore, the effect of covid measures and physical distancing has significantly reduced capacity, particularly where services are working to the same staffing.

It should also be noted that several areas have not returned data in relation to these metrics for this period, so the figures presented show a data return rate of 90.6%.

2021 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. 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 (please see table below for latest update).

Yours sincerely,



Bernard O'Regan
Head of Operations - Disability Services,
Community Operations

	Progress on the new Centre-based Respite Services
CHO1	CHO 1 has completed a review of respite needs and has agreed to use the funding available to provide a respite service for children in the Sligo-Leitrim area. They will shortly commence the procurement process for the service. In the interim, time-related savings will be used to enhance the level of respite being provided through existing respite services for children and adults in Donegal and Sligo. They will also procure increased day respite through existing providers. Due to open Qtr. 2, 2022, action plan updated 5.11.2021. Procurement process under way.
CHO2	CHO 2 have revised their plan in conjunction with service providers and Disability Managers to use the entire allocation of funding for respite between 1/8/21 – 31/12/21. The review of where to allocate funding focused on current emergency cases, business cases and service needs. The proposal has endeavoured to be fair and equitable to all individuals and to support various respite options and be person centred. A new respite service in Galway East sector will also be developed.
CHO3	CHO 3 had a facility ready for opening once the revenue funding was allocated. This service for children with complex support needs, being provided by St Gabriel's, commenced in May 2021
CHO4	A respite service for adults will be developed in Cork by the Brothers of Charity and is scheduled to open in Q4 2021.
CHO5	Delta Services Carlow are currently in the process of arranging some minor building works to ensure the building complies with H&S standards. They plan to open the Unit the first week in December, 2021.
CHO6	The capital works required for the new respite house have gone out to tender. It is planned that the respite house developed by HSE - Southside Residential Intellectual Disability Service for adults at Respite House Bakers Corner, Co Dublin will be operationalised in Q1 2022.

CHO7	A development plan is in place for the provision of respite for children, with a component of the development to focus on the needs of children with complex behaviour support needs. CHO7 hopes to operationalise one section of the property (i.e. self-contained apartment) towards the end of December 2021 with a view to a full opening on a phased basis during Q1 2022.
CHO8	CHO 8 has developed a proposal to open a respite service for adults in a house owned by the HSE in Offaly. To allow time for Estates to complete the necessary works and for HIQA registration to be completed it is anticipated that the service will be ready to open in November.
CHO9	CHO 9 has developed a respite service for children called " <u>The Hamlet</u> " based in Swords, Co Dublin. The Hamlet, which is now open, is a bespoke house developed to provide specialist respite services to children and families in the area. Minister Rabbitte was invited to 'officially' open the house in October, 2021