



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

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26<sup>th</sup> July 2023

Deputy Pauline Tully,  
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Leinster House,  
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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: 35366/23**

*To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the additional funding that was allocated for respite services; the additional respite hours created; the additional respite centres created; the location of each new respite centre that was created in 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and to-date in 2023; 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 table below provides information on the funding for respite services over the last 5 years:

<b>Respite</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
Funding for Respite Service Provision as per National Service Plan across disability services	€53,595,000	€56,212,000	€70,677,000	€87,423, 000	€96,465,000

It is important to note that additional funding for respite services allows for the provision of day only and overnight respite hours. As mentioned above, 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. This includes also a range of alternative respite projects including Saturday clubs, breakaway schemes, and summer



schemes. Many centres providing respite services increased their capacity at existing centres to provide increased respite hours.

## Respite Centres

There has been increased investment in Respite Service over the last number of years that includes additional allocation in successive National Service Plans to develop:

- In 2021, 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. The majority of these services are now in place.
- In 2022, three additional specialist centre-based services to provide 4,032 nights to 90 children, one to be Prader-Willi appropriate and the other two to provide high-support respite for children and young adults with complex support needs, in addition to seven further respite services which will provide 9,408 nights to 245 children and adults in a full year.
- In 2023, five additional respite services and increase one service from part time to full time opening to provide 7,872 additional nights to 278 people in a full year. Along with, the provision of 27 additional in-home respite packages to children and young adults in a full year and 265 day-only respite packages to 180 people in a full year.

The following shows how this increased investment has impacted positively on the level service delivered in successive years:

- **2020 - 87,177 overnights were accessed by people with a disability** (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.)
- **2021 – 94,606 overnights and 16,306 day only sessions were accessed by people with a disability** (the number of respite overnights operated at 10.9% ahead of the target for the year of 85,336, which is reflective of the easing of restrictions during the second half of 2021.)
- **2022 - 131,057 overnights and 28,369 day only sessions were accessed by people with a disability** (the number of respite overnights was 41.6% ahead of the target for the year of 92,555, and which is reflective of the gradual return to pre-pandemic levels of service.) The number of day only sessions (28,369) was also significantly ahead of the target of 22,474 for 2022.
- **2023 (Quarter 1) - 33,233 overnights and 8,853 day only sessions were accessed by people with a disability in Q1** (the number of respite overnights is 2.7% ahead of the target for the year of 32,353 and 20.9% up on activity for same period last year; while the number of day only sessions (8,853) is 44.7% up on the target of 6,118 for Quarter 1, 2023). This shows that the upward trend has continued into 2023.

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 people's lives. Respite is a key priority area for the HSE for people with disabilities and their families and we have seen significant investment in respite services in last few years. In this regard, the HSE continues to work with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth



during the Estimates process to highlight the growing need for respite services for people with a disability and to emphasise the need for additional funding to meet this need.

The HSE will also continue to work with agencies to explore various ways of responding to the need for additional capacity in relation to respite services, in line with the budget available.

Yours Sincerely,

*Bernard O'Regan*

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

