



Oifig an Stiúrthóra Náisiúnta Cúnta –
Oibríochtaí Pobail
Seirbhísi do Dhaoine Scothaosta
Tel: 087 345 5593
Email: olderpeople.operations@hse.ie

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Services for Older People
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26th July 2023

Deputy Denis Naughten TD,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Naughten,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) 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 34572/23

To ask the Minister for Health the number of respite beds available for older people and people with a disability respectively, by CHO in 2019 and in 2023; when respite beds withdrawn during Covid will be reinstated in light of the hardship being caused to carers and their families; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Response from HSE Services for Older People Operations.

Within Residential Care Facilities for the Older Person short stay beds are categorised under a number of headings including Respite beds. These beds are currently open.

Designated short stay beds for respite purposes can be categorised as follows:

- Respite Beds
- Dementia Specific Respite Beds
- Convalescent Beds

Short stay beds can be interchangeable for use in response to particular service needs in residential care units at any given time, therefore the total number of respite beds (Respite, Convalescent, Dementia Specific Respite) in any one month can fluctuate.



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CHO Area	Respite Beds		Convalescent Beds		Dementia Specific Respite Beds	
	2023	2019	2023	2019	2023	2019
CHO 1	51	69	21	33	15	11
CHO 2	27	46	72	124	0	0
CHO 3	32	53	0	0	0	2
CHO 4	47	73	57	18	0	4
CHO 5	37	50	52	67	4	3
CHO 6	26	27	3	0	0	0
CHO 7	3	37	0	0	4	10
CHO 8	13	30	9	0	3	9
CHO 9	7	15	0	0	0	0
Totals	243	400	214	242	26	39

It is important to note that these figures relate to publicly managed older persons residential units only and do not take into account respite beds sourced through contractual arrangement with voluntary and private providers.

2019 data reflects the relevant bed status prior to the outbreak of Covid-19. It is noted that there has been a reduction in the total respite bed capacity within publicly managed facilities. This is mainly attributed to adhering to regulations under SI293 which necessitated the closure/reconfiguration of a number of community nursing units. The Capital Investment Programme was stood up to address this issue and ensure SI 293 compliance. Resources were also sourced through the voluntary/private sector to address any gap in service.

Any respite services closed due to Covid-19 outbreaks have now returned but may continue to be affected by temporary closures where there is a requirement to designate short stay beds for isolation purposes in compliance with Public Health Guidelines. They may also be affected by rolling temporary closures as the Capital Investment Programme continues across many areas to ensure CNU's are fully compliant with all required standards.

Response from HSE Specialist Disability Services

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;



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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.

There is a maximum of 782 respite beds available throughout the country (485 for Adults; 212 for Children; and 79 mixed) of which 642.5 are currently available. Please note that this information is not available for 2019.

Please see table below with the current number of respite centres for adults and children with disabilities, together with the number of people availing of Respite Services and the 2022 outturn for respite overnights, broken down by CHO Area. It is important to note that some centres provide respite for both adults and children on alternating weeks.

	CHO1	CHO2	CHO3	CHO4	CHO5	CHO6	CHO7	CHO8	CHO9	Total
Maximum Respite Occupancy of Designated Centre	37	112.7	71	126	64	105	104	81	81	781.7
No of Active Respite Beds in Designated Centre	37	96.6	65	85	57	56	103	70	73	642.6
No of People availing of Respite	309	694	446	665	713	304	788	979	771	5669.0
2022 Outturn Overnights Provided	6,006	33,105	12,879	13,108	10,170	9,754	16,298	18,894	13,358	133,572

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



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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 - 133,572 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.



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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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ultan Hynes".

Ultan Hynes

Head of Service – Nursing Homes Support Scheme