



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

Office of the Head of Operations,
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26th June 2023

Deputy Sean Sherlock,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: sean.sherlock@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Sherlock,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the following parliamentary questions, which were submitted to this department for response.

PQ: 27750/23

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the number of beds, in tabular form, in each unit, in each LHO, assigned for respite for children and families of those with additional needs; and the cost per centre and staff allocated per centre of respite, in tabular form.

PQ: 27751/23

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the number of beds, in tabular form, in each unit, in each LHO, assigned for respite for relatives of families aged 18 years and older; and the cost per centre and staff allocated per centre of 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.

The provision of residential respite services has come under increasing pressure in the past number 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”;
- 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;
- the regulation of service provision as set by HIQA, which requires Service Providers to comply with regulatory standards in order to meet regulation. Standards specify a requirement for personal and appropriate space



which impacts 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.

The table below provides information on the funding for respite services over the last 5 years:

Respite	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
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

The cost per centre and the staff allocated per centre of respite varies according to several factors. This includes considerations such as number of beds, number of service users, occupancy levels, the specific needs requirements of the service users, the whole time equivalent (WTE) staffing required to meet those residents' needs, the types /disciplines of staff required to meet the needs of the service users, the costs to employ those staff, specific training requirements of staff, if agency staff are required and various other utilities and overhead/ costs including rental costs if the accommodation is not owned by the agency/HSE.

The annual running cost (revenue cost) of a 4-bed overnight respite centre, operating at 7 days a week is in the range of €770k to €1.03 million approximately depending on level of service user complexity.

With regard to the number of respite beds for adults with disabilities and the number of respite beds for children with disabilities, this information is currently being collated and verified. It is important to note that some centres provide respite for both adults and children on alternating weeks.

Respite beds assigned for respite for relatives of families

In line with HIQA standards, privacy, rights and dignity, most of the accommodation facilities in respite centres consists of one bedded rooms. In some centres, there may be one, but unlikely to be more, that will enable to provision of respite services to family members for example a sibling.

However, this must be provided in line with rights and privacy as outlined above and indeed the consent of the individuals. Other considerations must be taken into account such as infection control precautions, fire safety precautions and the compatibility of the service users.

Increased Investment

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 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 agencies to explore various ways of responding to this need in line with the budget available.

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.

Yours Sincerely,



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

