

8th June, 2023.

Mr. Aindrias Moynihan TD
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ: 25939/23

“To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the measures that are being taken to address the shortage of respite services for adults and children in Cork; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”

Dear Deputy Moynihan,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Questions, which you submitted to the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth for response.

Respite 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; 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 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.

Respite Services Cork - children:

A Regional Children's Respite Forum was established in 2022 and the overall purpose of the Forum Committee is to ensure that all children with a disability up to the age of 18 years, who are in receipt of services from a CDNT in Cork Kerry Community Healthcare (CKCH) would be eligible to apply for respite and/or home support services. This equally applies to children attending special schools and those accessing services through Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNT's). Previously only children in special schools could get access to respite which excluded all other children who are also complex and also need access to respite.

While the Forum is still in its infancy it is accepting applications. These are reviewed, assessed and approved based on agreed access criteria; appropriate referral pathway to the committee; assessment based on level of need and the most appropriate provision for each child and thereafter on the basis of capacity and availability of service.

In Cork overnight respite services for children under 18 years of age with an intellectual disability, physical disability or autism is delivered by a range of organisations namely, Cope Foundation, Enable Ireland, St. Josephs Foundation, CoAction and the Brothers of Charity. There are a total of 25 beds however, regrettably 10 of the beds are closed due to staffing shortages. Some beds have reopened but on an inconsistent basis, again due to staffing constraints. There is also a number of sessions of day respite provided to children which consists of a centre based day and outreach services for children. Day respite is provided in a variety of ways and settings such as in the home, in the community, during holiday time, as home share with host families and through after school services.

Respite Services Cork - Adults:

A Regional Adults Respite Forum for Adults is in place and processes applications and allocates respite to adults.

In Cork overnight respite services are provided for adults over 18 years with intellectual disability, physical disability or autism is delivered by a range of organisations namely, Cope Foundation, Enable Ireland, St. Josephs Foundation, CoAction, Abode, Praxis Care, Rehabcare and the Brothers of Charity with a total of 38 beds. Staffing continues to be a significant issue currently.

Garrettstown regional respite centre opened in early 2022 in Garrettstown, Co. Cork with 5 beds. Services are provided by Brothers of Charity (BOC) and respite is accessed via the Regional Respite Forum.

Developments:

National Service Plan funding 2022 has been used to fund an approved proposal from Enable Ireland for an increase in Children's respite in the Lavanagh Centre, Curaheen, Cork. Lavanagh House currently offers 138 bednights. The new development will increase this provision by 690 bednights giving a total of 828 bednights. A total of 48 children (referrals through the childrens' respite forum) will benefit in a full year from this development. It will provide an



overnight respite service at 6 nights per week (Mon-Sun) over 46 weeks. This will commence on a phased basis from mid-June to September of this year and Enable Ireland, who are being funded to provide the service are currently recruiting the necessary staffing requirement.

National Service Plan funding 2023: HSE Cork Kerry Community Healthcare Disability Services has since received its letter of allocation of new development funding under NSP 2023 and the funding for expansion of respite services to CKCH is less than 50% of the usual annual development funding allocated to CKCH for respite services and no funding for residential respite. Undoubtedly this will impact on what can realistically be achieved within budget and in consideration of competing priorities for respite funding in both Cork and Kerry.

If I can be of further assistance please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Yours sincerely,



Majella Daly,
Head of Disability Services
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare

