

23rd June, 2023

Mr Thomas Gould, TD.,
Dáil Eireann,
Dublin 2

PQ ref 26053/23

“To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the funding provided for residential respite for children's disability services in CHO 4 in each of the past five years, in tabular form.”

Dear Deputy Gould,

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. I apologise for the delay in issuing this response to you.

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 for Children

A Cork Regional Children’s Respite Forum was established in 2022. The Forum Committee manages referrals and respite service provision in the Cork area. The overall purpose of the Committee is that children up to the age of 18 years with a disability, 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. The Forum is still in its infancy however applications are in process and reviewed, assessed and approved based on agreed access criteria - appropriate referral pathway to the committee; assessment based on level of need; the most appropriate provision for each child and thereafter on the basis of capacity and availability of service.

This process will ensure there is an equitable provision of service based on prioritised needs. These services will be provided for children with disabilities i.e. intellectual, physical/sensory and/or Moderate-Severe Autism. Previously respite provision was linked with attendance at Special Schools.

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, Enable Ireland, St. Josephs Foundation, Cope Foundation, CoAction and the Brothers of Charity and private service providers. There are a total of 25 beds however, 10 of the beds are closed due to staffing shortages. 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.

Information for the last three years is being provided for CHO4 from Service Arrangement documentation.

CHO 4 Children’s Residential Respite Funding based on Service Agreements	2020	2021	2022
Cork	€2,890,296.00	€2,744,083.00	€2,727,045.00
Kerry	€1,192,507.00	€1,129,745.00	€1,453,229.00
Overall	€4,082,803.00	€3,873,828.00	€4,180,274.00

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, and Cork. Lavanagh House currently offers 138 bed nights. The new development will increase this provision by 690 bed nights giving a total of 828 bed nights. 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.

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

Yours sincerely,



**Ms. Majella Daly,
Head of Disability Services,
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare**

