



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

Office of the Head of Operations,
Disability Services/Social Care Division,
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1st December 2023

Deputy Pauline Tully,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: pauline.tully@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Tully,
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: 48815/23

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the number of disabled people under the age of 65 years that have been placed in a nursing home in each of the years 2019 to 2022 and to date in 2023; and the average length of stay for a disabled person under the age of 65 years that has been placed in a nursing home.

PQ: 48816/23

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth what more appropriate alternative options are considered before a disabled person under the age of 65 years is placed in a nursing home.

PQ: 48817/23

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the number of disabled people under the age of 65 years that have been inappropriately placed in a nursing home in each of the years 2019 to 2022 and to date in 2023.

HSE Response

The HSE established a dedicated funding stream as part of the National Service Plan to enable people under the age of 65 years living in Nursing Homes to move to homes of their choosing in the community, with support. This initiative is in line with the Programme for Government and the UNCRPD, as well as Time to Move On Policy and the Ombudsman's Report into the placement of persons under 65 years of age in nursing homes.

As per the 2023 National Service Plan, 5.5 million has been allocated to support the work of U65 transitions and enhancing quality of life for 2022 and 2023.



At Community Healthcare Organisation level, Disability teams work with persons under 65 years of age, currently residing in nursing homes to discuss moving to living arrangements in line with their will and preference or alternative supports and/or additional supports within their current environment.

Any decision to move to a new model of service delivery by an individual requires assessments of their individual needs which may include the individual sourcing suitable housing, adaptations to their original home, recruitment of staff among other dependencies including delivery of safe care and new resources.

It is important to note that it is some people's will and preference to be admitted to and to continue to reside in a Nursing Home.

In addition, there are also a number of people who have complex medical and social care needs that require intensive nursing and medical care that cannot be provided in a home setting or by family members. This might include people who have conditions such as Acquired Brain Injury or early onset dementia.

For individuals who will continue to stay in a nursing home either because it's their will and preference or due to their assessed needs, disability teams are working to provide and fund more quality of life supports to enhance their daily lives, where applicable.

Bearing in mind the uniqueness and complexities of each person's situation, choice, social and medical/care needs and requirements, all options are explored and are considered before a disabled person under the age of 65 years is admitted to a nursing home.

These include, but are not limited to:

- Can their complex care requirements be met in the home/community environment?
- What input or supports can be provided by family members that would meet these requirements?
- What adaptations are required in the home?
- Are there other suitable housing options there if required?
- What level of PA, Home Support, Intensive Home Care Packages can be provided?
- Are there carers available to provide the supports?
- What other post discharge supports does the person require?

The Nursing Home Support Scheme (NHSS) office has provided us with the following information:

Annual average Length of Stay figures are calculated by using data for clients who ceased funding under NHSS during that year.

Year of 1st Admission	Number of Clients Under 65 on 1st Admission
2019	376
2020	378
2021	See detailed information below
2022	See detailed information below
2023	See information below



Year of Discharge	Average Length of Stay for Discharged Clients (in Years)
2019	2.84
2020	2.67
2021	3.21
2022	3.11

The Nursing Home Support Scheme (NHSS), known as Fairdeal, provides monthly data on new U65 admissions to Nursing Homes. Figure 1 shows the number of individuals U65 admitted to nursing homes per month for 2021, 2022 and up to August 2023. For 2021, the average admittance per month was 26 individuals, in 2022 it was 27 individuals. Overall, March and April show the highest admittance rates.

May of this year, saw an increase to 41 admissions. This increase is determined to be due to the impact of the HSE's January's discharge programme from Acutes (from acute discharge to admittance to the NHSS data, there is a delay of several months for the Fair Deal application to be processed).

Figure 1.

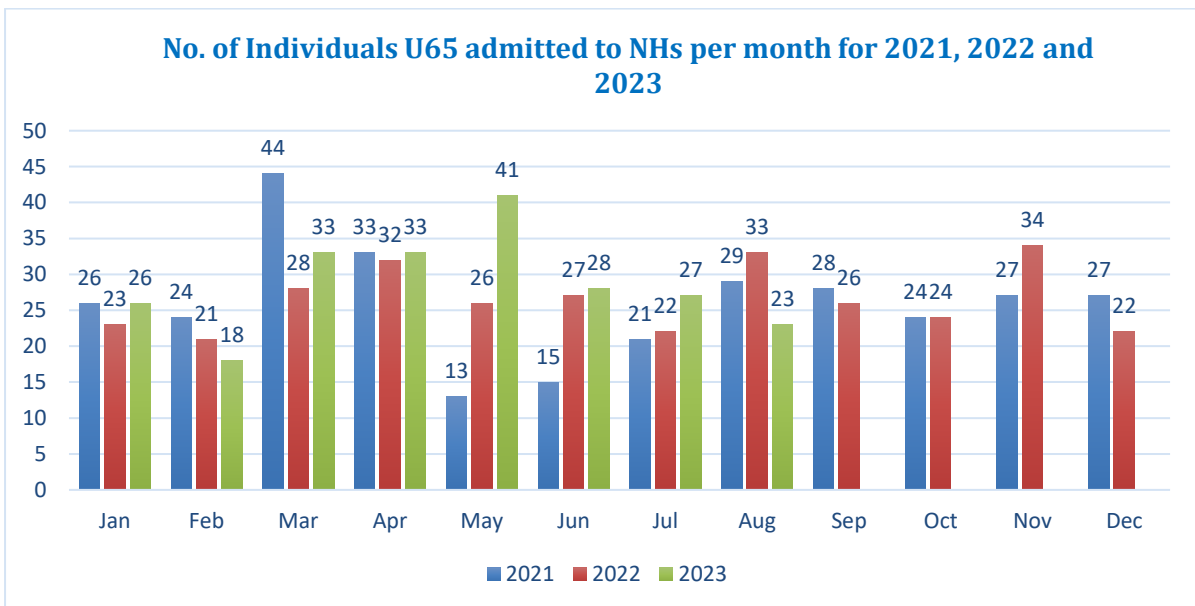


Fig 1. No. of individuals U65 admitted to NHs per month for 2021, 2022 and up to August 2023

Note: NHSS data is only for Fair Deal funded individuals by age profile and hence does not cover privately funded residents.

In response to recommendation 6.1 of the Ombudsman report, a national survey of residents under 65 living in nursing homes is being currently being rolled out. The first survey was for service providers. A survey link was issued to all HIQA registered Nursing Homes and Older persons residential services in April 2023. The survey was to be completed on a voluntary basis as per the DPIA and GDPR guidelines. This survey captured high level, non-identifiable data to be used for planning purposes. The service provider's survey closed on the 19th of June 2023.

The response rate to the survey was 35% with 202 responses from service providers. The data received identified 496 individuals 65 years and younger residing in nursing homes and older persons services.

The majority of the 496 residents, 23% are residing in nursing homes for more than 72 months. A further 16% are residing in nursing less than 6 months. Figure 2 provides a detailed breakdown of length of nursing homes stays based on this sample of individuals.



Figure 2.

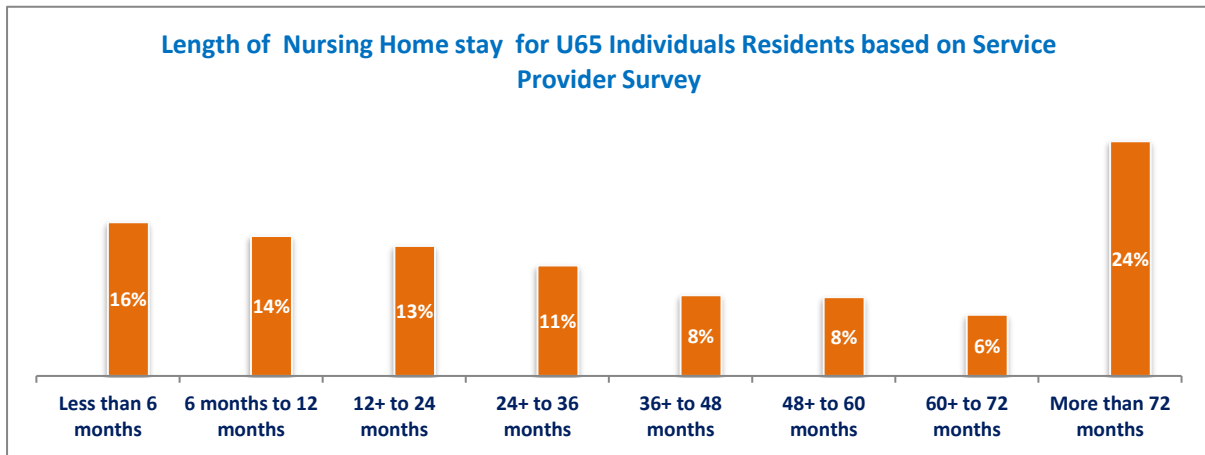


Fig 2. Data from Service Providers Survey 2023 based on 496 Individuals

The HSE has established an Integrated Steering Committee chaired by the Chief Operations Officer with membership drawn from Acute hospitals, Older Persons, Disability and Primary Care, along with clinical leads and representatives for people with lived experience.

The committee is overseeing the implementation of the recommendations of the Ombudsman's report 'Wasted Lives'. Five work streams have been established, focusing on;

1. Developing a Model of Service for the transition of individuals into the community and also to prevent their placement in Nursing Homes in the first place
2. Improving access to services and user navigation
3. Funding and personal finance
4. Informed consent, policy and human rights.
5. Under 65 Service Provider and Individual surveys

Yours Sincerely,

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

