



**Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,**  
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,  
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11<sup>th</sup> December 2023

Deputy Pauline Tully,  
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Dear Deputy Tully,

The Health Service Executive 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: 51928/23**

*To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth in view of the Ombudsman report Wasted Lives, the number of disabled people under the age of 65 that remain in a nursing home and who are deemed are not appropriately placed.*

**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.

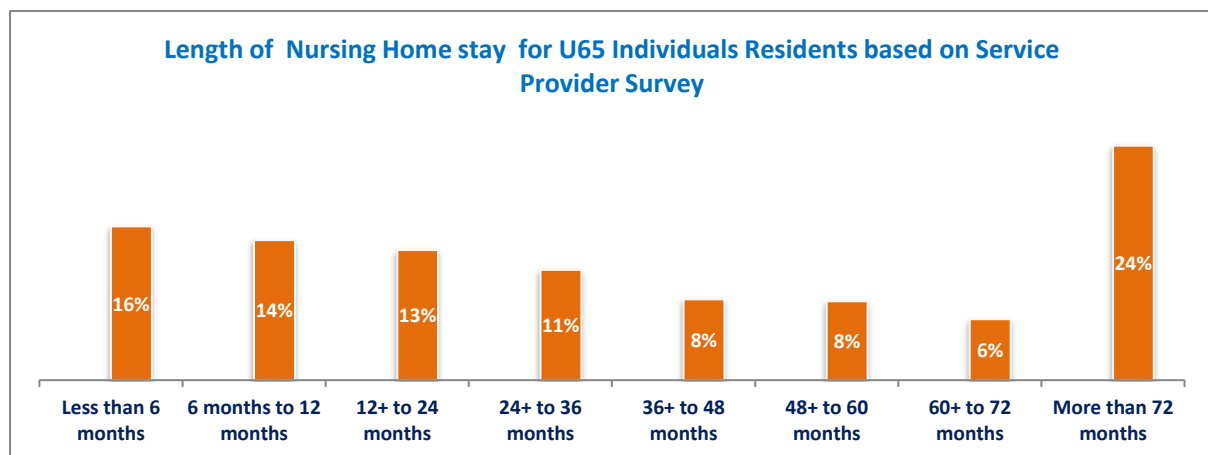
For individuals who will continue to stay in a nursing home either because it's their will and preference or due to their assessed needs, disability teams are working to provide and fund more quality of life supports to enhance their daily lives, where applicable.

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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 Nursing Home Support Scheme office have informed us that at the end of October 2023 there were 1,237 people under the age of 65 in Nursing Homes. However, important caveats regarding this information are:

- This information does not establish the number of people under 65 years of age in Nursing homes who have disabilities.
- This information does not include people in Nursing Homes under 65 years of age in Nursing Homes who are not in receipt of the Nursing Home Support Scheme.

In addition, it is not possible to state the number of people deemed inappropriately placed. As mentioned above, some individuals will continue to stay in a nursing home either because it's their will and preference or due to their assessed needs.

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*

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

