

2nd August, 2024

Ms. Holly Cairns, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann
Dublin 2

PQ ref 32793/24

“To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth for an update on the provision of respite care in Cork; and the details of the current waiting list for respite care in Cork.”

Dear Deputy Cairns,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to respond to your parliamentary question submitted to the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth for response.

Respite Services

The HSE and its funded Agencies provide respite services for 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, Outreach Supports and Holiday Breaks. This ensures that respite is provided in the manner which best meets the needs of the child/adult and their families. 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 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, and an increase in the age of people with a disability resulting in an increase in the peoples' care 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/or their home circumstances. As such 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 on the delivery of respite has been in response to the regulation of service provision by the Health Information and Quality Authority and the policy context, for example the 'Time to Move on from Congregated Settings' report.

The Health Act Regulations (SI 366 and 367) specify the legal requirements for service providers operating residential and overnight respite services. The service provider is legally obliged to demonstrate compliance with the relevant regulations to achieve and maintain registration of the service.

'Time to Move on from Congregated Settings' report outlines the requirement to reduce the numbers of people who live together in a residential setting. This has resulted in the requirement to review the living and respite arrangements in congregated settings in Cork and reconfigure settings to best meet the needs of those residing in the services. CKCH Disability Services are working with service providers in an effort to establish new respite arrangements to address the required reconfiguration and ensure minimal impact on those residing in or availing of respite in congregated settings.

Children's Respite Services Cork

The Cork Regional Children's Respite Forum, established in 2022, manages referrals and the allocation of respite and/or home supports for children, with complex disabilities, up to the age of 18 years and who are in receipt of services from a Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT). Children's Disability Services are acutely aware of the demand for respite services and has significantly invested in respite services in recent years.

The Cork children's respite forum has received a total of 462 applications since April 2023 to date. Of this total, 107 are re-applications for additional 6 week blocks of respite. The current waiting list of children to receive a respite service for the first time through the forum is 52.

Cork Kerry Disability Services has commissioned respite from the Rainbow Club who are currently providing 6 week blocks of respite services in the Cork area. The Rainbow Club provides for afterschool supports, social groups, teen supports, adapted sports and additional activities on Saturdays.



In Cork, overnight respite services for children under 18 years of age with an intellectual disability, physical disability or autism are 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 29 beds.

In 2023 CKCH provided funding to Enable Ireland to increase respite for children in the Lavanagh Centre, Curraheen, Cork. This resulted in an increase in bed nights from 138 bed nights in early 2023 to an expected 552 bed nights per annum from 2024 onwards.

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.

Adult Respite Services Cork

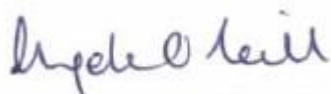
Residential respite services for adults in Cork is delivered by Brothers of Charity, COPE Foundation, St Joseph's Foundation, CoAction, Enable Ireland, RehabCare and Abode. 88 residential respite beds comprising 28 full time places and 60 part time places are provided.

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare's (CKCH) Disability Services have worked to improve access to residential (overnight) respite services for adults with disabilities in Cork in recent years. This has resulted in the establishment of a regional respite house for those residing in Cork which provides 5 beds on a full-time basis.

CKCH continues to invest in respite services, proactively seek alternative respite models and utilise all available funding to provide respite services for all children and adults who require them. CKCH are working with service providers to create new residential and alternative respite supports for children and adults in 2024 and welcomes any additional funding to continue to invest in these vital services.

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

Yours sincerely,



Angela O'Neill,
Head of Disability Services,
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare

