

27th May, 2024

Mr. Aindrias Moynihan, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2.

PQ ref 9697/24:

"To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the current capacity of respite care in County Cork for children with disabilities; the current shortfall on providing the respite service for children with disabilities for County Cork; what measures are being taken to increase the current capacity to meet the demands identified; 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 Question which you submitted to the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth for response.

A Regional Children's Respite Forum operates across Cork and Kerry. The forum manages referrals and respite service provision. There are currently 354 children awaiting respite in Cork and Kerry.

The overall purpose of the respite forum is to manage the allocation of respite and/or home supports for children up to the age of 18 years with complex disability needs, who are in receipt of services from a Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT) in Cork Kerry Community Healthcare (CKCH). Applications for respite are reviewed, assessed and approved based on agreed access criteria. These include use of appropriate referral pathway, 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 ensures there is an equitable provision of service based on prioritised needs. These services will be provided for children with complex disability needs; intellectual, physical / sensory and / or moderate-severe autism. The Cork Children's Respite Forum meets every 6 – 8 weeks. A total of 257 children have been referred since May 2023.

CKCH are acutely aware of the demand for respite services and, on receipt of very welcome funding, has significantly invested in respite services in recent years. 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 welcomes any funding to continue to invest in these vital services.

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 29 beds. 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 e.g. Rainbow Club.

We recognise that respite service provide valuable supports to families within Cork Kerry Community Healthcare who benefit from these resources. Details of services available in Cork are in the following table. As outlined above all referrals are processed via the Children's Respite Forum.

Registration Provider	Title	County	Service Type	Adult/ Child	Full/Part Time	Maximum Occupancy of Designated Centre	No of Respite Beds in Designated Centre
Enable Ireland Disability Services Limited	Lavanagh House	Cork	Respite	Child	Part-time	3	3
COPE Foundation	Cork City North 9 An Sireach – (Le Chéile)	Cork	Respite	Child	Full-time	8	8
CoAction West Cork CLG	Dunmanway Residential	Cork	Respite	Child	Part-time	6	6
Brothers of Charity Services Ireland CLG	Ban Laoi, No.1 Heather Park	Cork	Respite	Child	Part-time	6	6
St Joseph's Foundation	Cooleens House	Cork	Respite	Child	Part-time	0	6



Lavanagh Centre, Enable Ireland, Curraheen, Cork

Children's respite in the Lavanagh Centre, Curraheen, Cork has increased its bed nights from 138 bed nights in early 2023 to an expected 552 bed nights per annum. Occupancy is 69 single occupancy; 276 double occupancy and 207 triple occupancy rooms. A total of 48 children (+ referrals through the children's respite forum) will benefit in a full year from this development. When at capacity it will provide an overnight respite service of 6 nights per week (Monday-Saturday) over 46 weeks. Currently, it is operating 5 nights per week to allow for new children to transition into the service. This commenced on a phased basis in May 2023 and is approaching full capacity. There are currently 16 children on the waitlist.

CoAction, West Cork

Pending the appointment of a CEO, and due to current levels of staff vacancies, there will be no short to medium term increase in capacity. Overnight Respite is at capacity with 8 children on the waiting list. There is a vacancy currently in the unit due to complexity of children presenting. On average, 2 - 3 children are availing of respite per night resulting in actual respite being delivered of 10 -15 overnights.

Brothers of Charity Ban Laoi, Cork City

Ban Laoi respite comprises of two sections within the one respite centre. The centre is currently funded to be open 12 nights a fortnight and is funded for both sections of the building to be open for 7 nights, the remaining 5 nights are for only one section of the building to be open. The numbers submitted reflect single occupancy but at times they may be 2 - 3 children attending together in a group, which will be based on assessed needs and compatibility.

Cope Foundation, Cork City

There are 8 beds in An Sireach (formerly Le Chéile). There are currently 26 children on the waiting list for services. Cope have submitted a business case to further increase capacity in their children's overnight respite services.

Cooleens, St. Josephs Foundation, Charleville

This centre re-opened in July, 2023 with 52 nights delivered in 2023. It was hoped that 273 nights a year will be delivered when fully operational but at present, Cooleens is open only every second weekend and capacity is reduced to 1 night for 2- 3 children on each admission due to children having very high need requirements and compatibility of children. Staff shortages are also negatively impacting on service provision.

Rainbow Club, Cork City

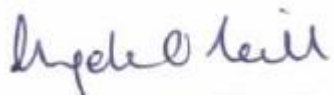
Rainbow Club provide after school supports, social groups, teen supports, adapted sports, and additional activities on Saturdays. Cork Kerry Disability Service is supporting the Rainbow Club since 2021 and through a grant aid agreement since 2022.

It is anticipated that 4,000 hours of respite will be delivered in 2024 to approximately 160 children.



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

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Angela O'Neill".

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

