

14<sup>th</sup> July 2025

Mr. Michael Cahill, T.D.,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

**PQ ref 37554/25**

**“To ask the Minister for Children; Disability and Equality to urgently provide additional respite services across County Kerry; and if she will make a statement on the matter.”**

Dear Deputy Cahill,

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

The HSE and its funded agencies provide respite care for children and adults with disabilities. Respite can occur in a variety of settings and for various lengths of time, depending on the needs of the individual service user, their family or carer and according to available resources.

HSE South West Disability Services operate separate Children and Adult Respite Forums. Each forum manages the referrals and respite service provision for the population. The overall purpose of each forum is to ensure equitable access to respite services, consistent with each person's assessed need and preference. Service provider representatives and HSE South West Disability Services personnel comprise membership of the Respite Fora.

HSE South West Disability Services is acutely aware of the demand for respite services. HSE South West has significantly invested in respite in recent years. The type and quantum of respite has been increased each year to meet the assessed needs and preferences of as many people as possible. In respect of the increase in funding allocated for respite, the funding has increased each year with €6.4m allocated in 2019 and €12.4m allocated in 2024. This shows that funding for respite in Cork and Kerry has increased by almost 100% in the 6 year period.

HSE South West Disability Services provide a range of respite models for children and adults. These include residential (overnight) respite centres, afterschool clubs for children and young people, in home support for children and adults, outreach supports and holiday breaks for adults. These options ensure that respite is provided in the manner which best meets the needs of people and their families / carers.

#### Children's Residential Respite Services Kerry

Kerry residential respite services for children aged between 6 and 18 years of age is delivered by St. John of God Services. There are two residential respite houses, one in North Kerry and one in South Kerry. Each house has 4 respite beds and operates 7 days per week with planned closures during the year.

#### Adult Residential Respite Services

Kerry residential respite services for adults who are aged 18 years to 65 years (at the age of entry) is delivered in two respite houses, one in North Kerry and one in South Kerry.

The North Kerry house has a maximum capacity of 4, is operated by The Orchard Care Group, and has opened in recent weeks following the closure of the service by the previous service provider. Additional funding has been allocated to ensure the service operates 7 days a week.

The South Kerry house has a maximum capacity of 4, is operated by Dovidá, and is open at weekends (Friday to Sunday) for 42 weeks per year (excluding bank holiday weekends). Work is ongoing to explore opening the house on a full-time basis subject to funding.

In addition to the two regional respite houses for Kerry there are an additional six beds for adult respite:

- Four in Brook Lodge in Listowel
- One in Tearmann Lodge in Rathmore
- One in Glebe Lodge in Castleisland

These are historical respite beds provided by Kerry Parents and Friends Association and support adults attending KPFA services.

#### Alternative Respite Services:

Respite is not always overnight and can be provided in a number of ways including centre based day respite, evening and weekend clubs and individualised supports. Respite is a vital part of the continuum of services for families, potentially helping to prevent out-of-home full-time residential placements, preserving the family unit, and supporting family stability.



Alternative respite services for children in Kerry include afterschool clubs, Saturday clubs and in home support as well as support for children to access community based activities. These are delivered by service providers in accordance with children and their families assessed needs and preferences.

Alternative respite services for adults in Kerry include evening and weekend support, outreach services and holiday breaks. All respite services are delivered by service providers in accordance with the adult and their family / carer's assessed needs and preferences.

Current developments:

In Kerry there are two recent developments, one for adults and one for children. The adult North Kerry respite house has been allocated additional funding to enable the service to open on a full time basis 7 days a week. This will ensure the service is utilised to its full capacity. For children a weekend club has commenced in Kerry. This club provides respite to approximately twenty children on a rotational fortnightly basis. Families are free to choose a morning or afternoon session which lasts for approximately three hours. Additionally a number of families have been provided with bespoke respite arrangements to support them in response to specific challenges.

HSE South West continue to work with service providers and families to develop additional respite services and continue to support as many people as possible within the allocated quantum of funding available. On receipt of further funding HSE South West will develop further respite services to meet the needs and locations of all people who require respite support. HSE South West remain committed to ensuring that respite is available in the quantum and service type to meet the needs of all those who require respite.

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

Yours sincerely,

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**Ms. Angela O'Neill,  
Head of Disability Services,  
HSE South West.**

