



7th August 2025

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

PQ ref 41377/25

“To ask the Minister for Children; Disability and Equality the efforts being made to increase capacity at overnight respite centres serving Kerry families (details supplied); and whether additional funding and staffing will be provided this year.”

Details Supplied: such as the Arches in Tralee

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 operates separate Regional Respite Forums for children's respite and for adult respite. Each forum manages the referrals and respite service provision for the population of the region. 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 South West Disability Services personnel comprise membership of the fora.



Children's Residential Respite Services:

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

Previously, five adults were receiving alternative weekend respite at the Abhaile Respite house due to a historical arrangement. These adults have moved to a full time residential service, therefore children are now accommodated every weekend at Abhaile, Listowel.

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 service is provided by Orchard Care in Duagh and the South Kerry service is provided at Cúnamh Iveragh in Caherciveen.

North Kerry Regional Adult Respite House

The HSE successfully engaged in a tendering process for the provision of a North Kerry Regional Adult Respite House. The Service Provider, Orchard Care was awarded the contract through procurement. This facility is HIQA registered, fully staffed with a plan to open four beds, seven nights a week.

Orchard Care has started providing respite services at their house in Duagh, North Kerry since April 2025. This replaces the service previously delivered by Kerry Parents & Friends Association at Cois na Féile, and is a much needed enhancement of respite availability in Kerry.

Cúnamh Iveragh

Opened in December 2023 and operated by Dovidá (formerly Home Instead), with four beds and is open three nights a week for 42 weeks per year (excluding bank holiday weekends). The intention of HSE South West Disability Services and Dovidá Ireland is to extend the service provision in Cúnamh Iveragh should additional funding become available.



Additional Adult Beds:

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 historical respite beds provided by Kerry Parents and Friends Association provide supports for adults attending KPFA services only.

Alternative Respite Services:

Non-residential respite includes day respite, evening and weekend clubs, and individualised supports. These services are vital in maintaining family stability and preventing long-term residential placements.

Children in Kerry benefit from afterschool and Saturday clubs, in-home support and access to community activities, all tailored to assessed need.

Adults receive evening and weekend support, outreach services, and holiday breaks delivered according to individual and family preferences.

HSE South West Disability Services is acutely aware of the demand for respite services and, on receipt of very welcome funding, has significantly invested in respite services in recent years. HSE South West 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. Disability Services are working with service providers to create new residential and alternative respite supports for children and adults in 2025 and welcomes any additional funding to continue to invest in these vital services.

HSE South West Disability Services along with agencies under Section 38 and Section 39 of the Health Act continue to operate in a very competitive global market for healthcare talent, given the significant shortages of qualified healthcare professionals across the globe. Unfortunately, recruitment challenges are affecting full delivery of respite support to families. This is especially the case in rural areas.

HSE South West Disability Services and the relevant agencies are liaising on a continuous basis to alleviate any staffing shortages by maximising available staff resources across all services, by developing innovative approaches to recruitment and by effective operational planning.



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

Yours sincerely,

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