



8th August 2025

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

PQ ref 41378/ 25

“To ask the Minister for Children; Disability and Equality if she will review the eligibility criteria of respite services, such as a service (details supplied), to ensure children with behavioural challenges are not excluded from accessing essential care.”

Detail Supplied: Home from Home

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 within available resources.

In 2022, HSE South West Disability Services established a Children’s Regional Respite Forum. The forum manages the referrals and respite service provision for the Cork and Kerry population. The overall purpose of the forum is to ensure there is equitable access to respite services consistent with each person’s assessed need and preference. Membership of the forum comprises of HSE personnel and service provider representatives.

Disability Services provides funding to Section 38/ 39 agencies to provide residential respite care for children with disabilities. Compatibility issues arise between children availing of respite services together depending on their individual needs and presentation. This can impact upon the level of service



provision to children with complex medical support needs and those with behavioural support needs who require overnight residential respite.

Other respite services offered may comprises of day respite, home from home, Saturday Clubs, overnight respite and after school respite. Once a respite application is approved, an assessment is carried out by a 'for profit' service provider to ensure that they can meet the identified need and may provide a tailored response in each situation.

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.

Eligibility Criteria for residential respite is set out in table 1 of the appendix to this letter.

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.**



Appendix

Table 1: Children's Residential Respite Locations

Agency	Location	No. of Beds	Eligibility Criteria
St Joseph's Foundation	Cooleens House, Charleville, Co. Cork	6	Children and young people aged 7 to 17.11 years with an intellectual disability (ID), autism & high medical needs with ID. *Funded between Cork CHO4 & Limerick CHO3.
Horizons (formerly Cope Foundation)	An Sireach, Cork	8	Children and young people aged 6 to 17.11 years with an intellectual disability.
Brothers of Charity	Ban Laoi, Heather Park, Cork .	6	Children and young people aged 8 to 17.11 years with moderate to severe ID.
CoAction	Children's Respite, Dunmanway North, West Cork	8	Children and young people aged 6 to 17.11 years with an intellectual disability.
St. John of God	Abhaile, Listowel, Co. Kerry	4	Children and young people aged 6 to 17.11 years Minimum moderate intellectual disability. Capacity for 25 children
St. John of God	Arches, Killorglin, Co. Kerry	4	Children and young people aged 6 to 17.11 years Minimum moderate intellectual disability. Capacity for 30 children.
Enable Ireland Disability Services Limited	Lavanagh House, Cork	3	Children and young people aged 6 to 17.11 years Physical & Sensory Disability
Total		39	