



13th August 2025

Deputy Pa Daly TD,

Dáil Eireann

Leinster House

Kildare Street

Dublin 2

Dear Deputy Daly,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the following Parliamentary Question, which was submitted to this Department for response.

PQ 43094/25:

To ask the Minister for Health the maximum length of respite care that a carer of an older person can apply for per annum free of charge; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Every application for Respite Care is reviewed on an individual basis to include the clinical support needs of the applicant together with the broader social support network that an individual may enjoy. Respite care for older persons is generally a pre-planned short admission of one to two weeks duration, dependent on the needs of carers, and arranged on an assessed care needs basis.

Access to a respite bed can be arranged by an individual's Public Health Nurse/Community Nurse in a HSE long term care facility and is dependent on bed availability. The Public Health Nursing services manages the schedule for respite beds in liaison with the Director of Nursing of the unit and will, where a cancellation arises, offer available beds so that optimal use is made of available capacity.

HSE respite beds in our community hospitals are categorized as 'short stay' public beds, which can be comprised of a mixture of palliative, respite, rehabilitation, convalescent and transitional care beds and are interchangeable for use depending on demand in our units.

If a person's overnight accommodation or maintenance costs are being provided by the HSE or on behalf of the HSE (such as when accommodated in a respite bed), then the person is being provided with Residential Support Services (RSS). In non-acute residential support service



settings, such as our community hospitals, an obligation to pay contributions towards maintenance and accommodation costs applies after a specified period of time under section 67C of the Health Act 1970.

There is a provision whereby after 30 days of RSS, the contribution to the cost of care begins – in other words, short stay care is provided without this contribution being payable in HSE facilities for up to 30 days in a rolling year. Weekly charges are then incurred after the 30 days have elapsed.

Further information can be found via the following link below;

www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/longstaycontributions

The HSE endeavors to ensure that all applicants receive appropriate supports/periods of respite care in terms of the capacity available within overall service.

I trust this information is of assistance to you,

Yours sincerely,

Kathleen Jordan

Head of Service

National Office, Access and Integration