



**Oifig an Stiúrthóir Cúnta Náisiúnta,  
Foireann Míchumais Náisiúnta, An Chéad**  
Urlár - Oifigí 13, 14, 15, Áras Phlásóg na Rós,  
Coimpléasc Gnó na hOllscoile, Páirc  
Náisiúnta Teicneolaíochta, Caladh an  
Treoigh, Luimneach

**Office of the Assistant National  
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1<sup>st</sup> July 2025

Deputy David Cullinane,  
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**PQ: 28598/25**

*To ask the Minister for Children; Disability and Equality the cost of doubling in-home, after school, day and overnight respite services, by service type; and the number of additional units this would create.*

**PQ: 28612/25**

*To ask the Minister for Children; Disability and Equality the estimated shortfall in respite services; and the cost of providing for unmet need.*

**PQ: 28613/25**

*To ask the Minister for Children; Disability and Equality the estimated annual requirement in respite services; and the cost of providing for this.*

Dear Deputy Cullinane,

Thank you for your Parliamentary Questions referenced above, which have been forwarded to me for direct reply.

The HSE and its funded Agencies provide respite care to children and adults with disabilities. Respite can occur in a variety of settings for various lengths of time, depending on the needs of the individual service user and their family or carer, and according to available resources. Respite is not always centre-based and can be provided in a number of ways, e.g. Centre based; In-Home; Home-to-Home; Family Support, etc. As a vital part of the continuum of services for families, respite potentially helps prevent out-of-home full-time residential placements, preserves the family unit, and supports family stability.

The provision of residential respite services has come under increasing pressure in the past number of years due to a number of impacting factors such as:

- an increase in the number of children and adults who are seeking access to respite as a reflection of general population increase;
- increasing levels of complexity across the sector due to better and improved health care;
- an increase in some cases in the age profile of people with a disability resulting in people presenting with “changing needs”;
- a significant number of respite places have been utilised on longer-term basis due to the presenting complexity of the individual with a disability and also due to home circumstances, which prevents availability of the service to other disabled persons who would normally avail of that respite.
- the regulation of service provision as set by HIQA, which requires Service Providers to comply with regulatory standards in order to meet regulation. Standards specify a requirement for personal and appropriate space which impacts on the capacity and Statement of Purpose for a Designated Centre. This has had a direct impact on capacity where respite



- beds are no longer allowed within a residential setting e.g. vacated by residents who go home at weekends or for holidays, can no longer be used for respite.
- Implementation of the national policy on congregated settings (Time to Move on from Congregated Settings Policy) determines capacity.

Respite is a key priority area for the HSE for people with disabilities and their families and we have seen significant investment in respite services, which has impacted positively on the level of service delivered in successive years.

In 2024, we delivered **160,952 overnights** and **64,162 day only sessions** to around 6,975 people with a disability. A comparison of 2023 and 2024 activity data, shows an increase of 9,351 respite overnights, representing a growth rate of 6.2% and additional Day-Only Sessions of 19,721 and a growth rate of 43.4%.

At the end of Quarter 1 2025, we delivered 39,015 overnight sessions and 16,093 day only respite sessions to 7,000 people with disabilities.

### Costs

With regard to the cost of doubling in-home, after school, day and overnight respite services, by service type and the number of additional units this would create.

- The cost of increasing (doubling) in home respite provision would be approximately €14,287,137.
- The cost of increasing (doubling) day only respite provision would be approximately €4,810,233

A Respite Residential unit would not be required for in home, afterschool and day respite service, however with regard to overnight respite, a residential respite unit/centre would involve:

- Design and Build and/or Purchase and Refurbishment of minimum 4 bedroom residence with ancillary requirements per Health and Safety requirements and HIQA registration – indicative estimate €670k to €980k per facility.

In the absence of specific details, it is not possible to provide a cost for any particular project, particularly in relation to capital costs, however, in relation to revenue costs, we can say that the first and full year revenue costs of providing 1 respite centre – without exceptional support needs - with a maximum occupancy of four places for people with disabilities would be:

- One additional Respite Centre would cost approximately €945,000 per annum.

It is important to note that these are approximate figures as it is not possible to give exact figures.

With regard to the estimated shortfall in respite services and the cost of providing for unmet need, **526** persons are identified by the CHO/ RHA areas on the Disability Supports Application Management Tool as requiring Respite Services. Based on providing an average of 2 nights respite per fortnight per year to each recipient, this would amount to a need for 18 additional respite centres, which based on previously advised costings would entail:

- Capital Costs of €12,060,000 to €17,640,000.
- Estimated Annual Revenue Costs of €17,010,000 - – without exceptional support needs

With regard to the estimated annual requirement in respite services and the cost of providing for this, there is significant unmet need currently and the projected changes in the size and age profile of the disability population will add to need over the coming decade.



With regard to centre based respite, the Disability Capacity Review informs of up to €10 million in additional provision per year is required (20% additional quantum – 26,200 approx. additional overnights per year).

The Action Plan for Disability Services 2024 – 2026, prepared by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, details the mix of overnight and alternative respite that will be provided in the short term, and will aim to maximise the impact and reach of these services.

It is proposed to increase the level of respite provision by around a third, through a mix of:

- Provision of alternative respite options including in-home respite, after-school and day respite programmes, host families, summer programmes;
- Using existing overnight residential capacity to the maximum extent;
- Providing additional overnight respite capacity where this is needed.

In NSP 2025, additional allocation has been provided to increase the occupancy of existing respite capacity, where feasible, and alternative respite provision, including in-home respite support hours and group-based targeted measures such as summer camps and evening provision.

Yours sincerely,

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Tom McGuirk,  
General Manager, Disability Services, Transformation & Programme Coordination, Access & Integration