



Ceann na Seirbhíse do Dhaoine
Scothaosta
FSS an Iardheiscirt
Teach Caha,
Párc Ghnó & Teicneolaíochta,
Bóthar na Modh Feirme,
Corcaigh

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Deputy Holly Cairns, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann
Dublin 2

PQ ref 53545/25

“To ask the Minister for Health the current number and location of respite beds in Cork; the staffing numbers for respite services in Cork; and the number of unfilled posts, in tabular form.”.

Dear Deputy Cairns,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Respite care is an essential component in ensuring older people with care needs in the home can be cared for in their community and close to their carers. Respite care for an older person is a short term residential placement normally within a client’s geographical area of one to two weeks duration and is arranged on an assessed care needs basis. Applications are submitted locally through the Public Health Nursing service and are often arranged and booked months or more in advance. Residential respite beds for older persons are provided in our HSE community hospitals/community nursing units, which provide short stay beds as well as long-stay residential care.

Short stay beds include step-up, step-down care, intermediate care, rehab and respite care beds comprised of a mixture of the following categories:

- Palliative
- Respite
- Rehab Specific
- Convalescent
- Dementia Respite
- Assessment beds
- Transitional care beds.

Short stay beds are interchangeable for use depending on demand in the centres and so the number of specific respite beds in any one month can fluctuate up and down. The below table illustrates the current position (October 2025) in relation to the number and location of short stay beds, including respite beds, in our residential units for older persons in Cork:

Unit	No of short stay beds (Oct 2025):
Bandon Community Hospital	4
Castletownbere Community Hospital	4
Clonakilty Community Hospital	14
Cois Abhainn, Youghal	5
Dunmanway Community Hospital	4
Fermoy (St Francis’s Unit)	14
Kanturk Community Hospital	3
Kinsale Community Hospital	5
Macroom Community Hospital	5
Schull Community Hospital	4
Skibbereen Community Hospital	6
St Finbarr’s	15
Total	83



In addition, HSE South West contracts respite-specific beds in private or voluntary units in Cork as follows:

- Cobh Community Hospital – 16 respite beds
- Nazareth House, Mallow – 12 respite beds
- St Luke's Home, Cork – 2 respite beds

The throughput in our units of people from a community hospital's local area for short stays has a beneficial outcome for residents who are in long term care and maintains and strengthens their links with the wider community. Staff in our community hospitals/community nursing units provide the same level of person centred, holistic care and skilled services to all of our residents whether they are being accommodated in a short stay or long stay bed. It is not possible to quantify staffing numbers or unfilled posts for respite staff as there are no staff in our residential units for older persons who are designated as respite staff. Our goal, in line with Sláintecare objectives, is to provide coordinated, person-centred care to all of our residents to improve health outcomes and quality of life.

I trust this clarifies the position and if you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Jackie Daly
Head of Service for Older Persons