



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
Director, National Disability Team,
First Floor- Offices 13, 14, 15,
Roselawn House, University Business
Complex, National Technology Park,
Castletroy, Limerick.

17th September 2025

Deputy Pearse Doherty,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: pearse.doherty@oireachtas.ie

PQ: 48057/25

To ask the Minister for Children; Disability and Equality the list of the counties in which home share is available for those seeking respite; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Doherty,

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

Wherever possible, people with disabilities are supported to live in the community and to access mainstream health and social care services. Specialist disability services focus on providing supports to people with more complex disabilities, and to complement the mainstream health and social care services provided to people with disabilities alongside the rest of the population. The development of specialist services is underpinned by some key principles including:

- Rights-based services aligned with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Services provided in the community where people live
- Early intervention to maximise people's capacities
- Person-centred services supporting people's choice and control
- A strengths-based approach, recognising and supporting the inherent abilities of people with disabilities
- Coherent and integrated services and supports
- Services that are equitable and consistent
- Prioritisation on the basis of assessed need
- Services provided by interdisciplinary teams, networked regionally with other teams, and supported by enhanced services and supports where necessary.

The principle of 'mainstream first' requires that HSE-led services are developed in the context of supporting actions by Government departments in the areas of housing, transport, education, including higher education, employment and social protection.

The HSE is endeavouring to ensure a more equitable approach to the delivery of key services and acknowledges that the needs of people with a disability extend well beyond health service provision. The health service participates fully with other Government departments and services in the development of cross-sectoral strategies to maximise access to services and supports for people with disabilities. In this context, there is a collective effort being made nationally and regionally to fundamentally reform how we deliver services for people with a disability and our commitment to uphold the UN Convention on the Rights of People with a Disability. Under the Transforming Lives policy, this has been a driving force of strong collaborative efforts over many years and where real progress has and continues to be made.



Alternative Respite – Home Sharing

In a funding environment of high cost respite services and the need to provide more alternative and person centred options for respite, Home Sharing is a specific, viable and low cost model of alternative respite, and strategically important moving forward.

Home Sharing is an internationally recognised model of support for both children and adults with a disability, it is defined as the provision of care to people with a disability in the Home Sharing family's home. The uniqueness of Home Sharing is that for suitable individuals' and their families, Home Sharing offers a genuine person centred option, which places an individual in a family, in a community setting and with multiple placement options to suit their needs.

Home Sharing is primarily delivered across section 38 and 39 service providers as part of the National Home-sharing and Short-breaks Network (NHSN).

Based on July 2024 mapping data, there are:

- 19 service providers and 2 HSE CHOs providing direct service delivery
- 50 WTEs, supporting 825 (284 children and 541 adults) individuals availing of Home Sharing
- 931 different Home Sharing placements (respite and residential), with a waiting list of 63 individuals.
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In terms of Home Sharing respite options and numbers availing of each scheme (both children and adults), there are in summary for:

Children:

- 42% of schemes accessed are Short Day Breaks
- 22% are Weekend Overnights
- 20% Midweek Overnights

Adults:

- 27% of schemes accesses are Midweek Overnights.
- Short Day Breaks and Weekend Overnights, both at 22%.

Note: Individuals accessing Home Sharing respite, could be utilising several different options, depending on their need.

Home Sharing Schemes are operational in 7 of the 9 previous CHO areas. Schemes are distributed across counties as follows:

- 37% of all Home Sharing schemes are in CHO8 - **Laois/Offaly, Longford/ Westmeath, Louth, and Meath**
- 21% in CHO2 - **Galway, Roscommon, and Mayo**
- 16% in CHO4 - **Kerry and Cork**
- 13% in CHO3 - **Clare, Limerick, and North Tipperary**
- 6% in CHO 7 – **Kildare, West Wicklow, Dublin West, Dublin South City and Dublin South West**
- 6% in CHO9 - **Dublin North, Dublin North Central, and Dublin North West**
- 1% in CHO 1 - **Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan, and Monaghan**

Note: CHOs 5 & 6 did not have any schemes in place, which covers South Tipperary, Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford, Wexford, Wicklow and Dublin South East.

Home Sharing as an alternate disability respite has critical benefits for the HSE, individuals and their families:

- **Person centered and community based**
- **Low cost option** – is a cost effective model of support and is a viable alternative to traditional costly respite center based.
- **High feasibility of achieving targets** - delivery structures in place across section 38 and 39 providers as part of the National Home-sharing and Short-breaks Network, NHSN. Additionally, this model is minimally affected by the current housing crisis and staffing shortages and pressures.



- **Meets the need of young adults transferring from foster placements** - and who wish to remain with their foster family. Foster families can be assessed as Shared living host families and the placement can continue with safe and effective governance and oversight
- **National Working group established** – a cross services and agency national working group has been established. The aim of this group is to support and develop Home Sharing across the country for both adults and children, and to implement 2016 *“Home Sharing in Intellectual Disability Services in Ireland”* report recommendations for resolving strategic and operational issues including establishing national standards.

Yours Sincerely,

Tom McGuirk,
General Manager, Disability Services, Access & Integration