



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

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30th September 2025

Deputy Michael Cahill, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann
Dublin 2

PQ ref 48127/25

“To ask the Minister for Health to prioritise in the Budget 2026 the chronic shortage of respite beds in County Kerry; and if she will make a statement on the matter”.

Dear Deputy Cahill,

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.

The essential role that family carers play in the provision of care in Ireland is fully recognised by the HSE. Respite care for older people offers temporary support, ensuring the well-being and comfort of those in need, as well as providing much needed breaks to those caring for their loved ones on a regular basis.

Respite may be provided in the community in HSE residential care settings, by agreement with voluntary organisations or by contracted private facilities. The provision of residential respite services has come under increasing pressure in recent years due to a number of factors, including an increase in the number of people who are seeking access to respite as a result of general population increase; increasing levels of complexity across the sector due to better and improved health care and the impacts of regulatory standards and national policy on capacity.

Respite care for older persons is generally a pre-planned short admission of one or two week's duration and dependent on the needs of the carers. Access to a respite bed can be arranged by an individual's Public Health Nurse/Community Nurse and is dependent on bed availability. The Public Health Nursing service manages the schedule for respite beds and will, where a cancellation arises, offer available beds so that optimal use is made of the available capacity. Other supports for carers including access to day care services, visiting services, home support and options around locations for respite can be explored with the Public Health Nursing service.

HSE South West is committed to maximising all available supports, including respite services, for older people in the Kerry region. As long as the number of people seeking respite bed access continues to increase, we will seek to identify opportunities to enhance respite bed capacity and availability pending maintenance of safe and adequate staffing levels to deliver optimal care to our residents. We continuously review our services in line with population health planning and Sláintecare principles to ensure the ongoing development of modern services across the Kerry region.

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

Seirbhís sláinte a thógáil a bhfuil ár bpobal bródúil aisti
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