



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.

23rd September 2025

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

PQ: 48663/25

To ask the Minister for Health the number of child respite beds which exist and are available to be used in each county, broken down by those which are provided by the HSE and provided privately, in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

PQ: 48664/25

To ask the Minister for Health the number of adult respite beds which exist and are available to be used in each county, broken down by those which are provided by the HSE and provided privately, in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

PQ: 48665/25

To ask the Minister for Health the number of respite beds that are planned to be delivered in the future, broken down by county, whether the beds are for children or adults and whether the beds are being provided by the HSE or privately, in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Doherty,

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. 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.

It is important to note that respite services are not always centre-based and are provided in a number of ways, e.g. Centre based; In-Home; Home-to-Home; Family Support, etc. In that context, Respite beds are not reported on nationally. In addition, a respite bed in a centre may yield several respite places depending on the centre, the requirements of people availing of respite services and their families, compatibility with other service users and other considerations such as infection control/ health and safety.

Listing and numbers of Respite beds/centres is not routinely compiled, however a review conducted of the July 2025, HIQA Register has provided the following information:

- There are 164 centres with a total of 798 respite beds – Overall
- 90 centres with a total of 423 respite beds – Adults
- 47 centres with a total of 227 respite beds – Children's
- 27 centres with a total of 148 respite beds – Mixed (Some centres provide respite for both adults and children on alternating weeks).



Please see Appendix 1 which provides information on respite centres and bed numbers by county and also gives information on the centres providing adult or children respite services or both.

Please note that the HIQA Register does not identify the type of service provider, therefore it is not possible to identify the Private Providers from the register .

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 July 2025, we delivered **82,609 (adjusted for non return)** overnight sessions and 33,966 (adjusted) day only respite sessions to 7,460 (adjusted) people with disabilities.

There is no centrally maintained waiting list for respite services. The local HSE CHO/RHA areas would be aware of the need and requirements in their respective areas and would work with the local Service Providers with a view to responding to the level of presenting needs within the resources available.

Disability Support Application Management Tool (DSMAT)

HSE Disability Services has introduced a system called the Disability Support Application Management Tool (DSMAT), which provides a list and detailed profiles of people (Adults & Children) who need additional funded supports in each CHO.

DSMAT captures detailed information on home and family circumstances and a detailed presentation profile of the individuals. This enables Community Healthcare Organisation (CHO) areas to record and manage requests for support and to ensure that the application process is equitable and transparent.

It is important to note that in the absence of a statutory, legislative framework providing entitlement to services, the DSMAT is not a chronological waiting list. Rather, it is a support to the local health area to feed into its decision making process around prioritisation of services, subject to budgetary constraints.

This means that services are allocated on the basis of greatest presenting need and associated risk factors.



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).

Future Planning

There is significant unmet need currently and the projected changes in the size and age profile of the disability population will add to unmet 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.

HSE Disability Services has been engaging with Department of Children, Disability, and Equality (DCDE) in relation to their draft Programme for Government Delivery Plan. This includes implementation of the Action Plan for Disability Services 2024-26, and resourcing and delivering on its targets as well as developing a new Vision for specialist disability supports and services for 2030 and a revised Capacity Review.

Specifically, in relation to respite service, the HSE is working in conjunction with DCDE to develop a working paper to examine provision to date, demand, and challenges to inform future respite provision. This will include a HSE Audit of the capacity & provision of respite services across all Health Regions.

Estimates Process

Each year the HSE participates in the Estimates Process with the Department of Health and makes a submission for additional monies to meet the health and social care needs of the population it services.

The Disability Service makes submissions for additional funding for services including Respite Services.

The HSE makes every effort to secure multi-annual investment for services via the Estimates process and is very conscious of the need to deliver disability policy on a more sustainable footing given the significant levels of need for



increased and more effective services and supports to enable people with a disability to live independent lives in their own community.

Ahead of Budget 2026 and the publication of the 2026 Service Plan, the HSE has submitted bids for significant funding for increases in the provision of Day Only, Overnight and Alternative Respite (in-home respite, after-school, day respite programmes, host families, summer programmes) provision for the year ahead .

Yours Sincerely,

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



Appendix 1

County	Respite	Centre Type	Number of centres	Number of respite beds
Carlow	Respite service only	Adults	1	4
Carlow	Respite service only	Children's	1	4
Cavan	Respite service only	Mixed	1	5
Clare	Both residential & respite services	Adults	1	1
Clare	Respite service only	Adults	3	11
Clare	Respite service only	Children's	2	7
Clare	Respite service only	Mixed	1	4
Cork	Both residential & respite services	Adults	3	15
Cork	Respite service only	Adults	6	34
Cork	Respite service only	Children's	5	29
Donegal	Respite service only	Adults	1	3
Donegal	Respite service only	Mixed	4	17
Dublin	Both residential & respite services	Adults	1	5
Dublin	Both residential & respite services	Mixed	1	5
Dublin	Respite service only	Adults	13	73
Dublin	Respite service only	Children's	10	50
Dublin	Respite service only	Mixed	2	29
Galway	Both residential & respite services	Adults	3	12
Galway	Respite service only	Adults	7	38
Galway	Respite service only	Children's	5	25
Kerry	Respite service only	Adults	4	15
Kerry	Respite service only	Mixed	2	8
Kildare	Both residential & respite services	Adults	1	4
Kildare	Respite service only	Adults	6	22
Kildare	Respite service only	Children's	1	5
Kildare	Respite service only	Mixed	3	15
Kilkenny	Respite service only	Adults	1	2
Laois	Both residential & respite services	Adults	1	1
Laois	Both residential & respite services	Children's	1	6
Laois	Respite service only	Mixed	2	9
Leitrim	Respite service only	Children's	1	3
Leitrim	Respite service only	Mixed	1	5
Limerick	Respite service only	Adults	3	17
Limerick	Respite service only	Children's	3	16
Longford	Respite service only	Adults	1	6
Longford	Respite service only	Children's	1	4
Louth	Both residential & respite services	Adults	2	10
Louth	Respite service only	Adults	2	8
Louth	Respite service only	Children's	1	6
Mayo	Both residential & respite services	Adults	5	19
Mayo	Respite service only	Adults	1	4
Mayo	Respite service only	Children's	2	7
Mayo	Respite service only	Mixed	1	3



Meath	Both residential & respite services	Adults	1	1
Meath	Respite service only	Adults	2	11
Meath	Respite service only	Children's	4	22
Monaghan	Respite service only	Adults	1	4
Monaghan	Respite service only	Children's	1	5
Offaly	Respite service only	Adults	3	11
Offaly	Respite service only	Mixed	1	4
Roscommon	Both residential & respite services	Adults	2	8
Roscommon	Respite service only	Adults	1	4
Roscommon	Respite service only	Children's	1	4
Sligo	Both residential & respite services	Mixed	1	2
Tipperary	Both residential & respite services	Mixed	1	1
Tipperary	Respite service only	Adults	2	8
Tipperary	Respite service only	Children's	2	11
Tipperary	Respite service only	Mixed	1	10
Waterford	Both residential & respite services	Adults	1	2
Waterford	Respite service only	Adults	1	10
Waterford	Respite service only	Mixed	1	11
Westmeath	Respite service only	Adults	2	13
Westmeath	Respite service only	Children's	1	4
Westmeath	Respite service only	Mixed	2	9
Wexford	Both residential & respite services	Adults	1	3
Wexford	Respite service only	Adults	2	9
Wexford	Respite service only	Children's	1	4
Wexford	Respite service only	Mixed	1	7
Wicklow	Both residential & respite services	Mixed	1	4
Wicklow	Respite service only	Adults	5	35
Wicklow	Respite service only	Children's	4	15