



1st October 2025

Mr. Michael Cahill, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ ref 50174/25

“To ask the Minister for Children; Disability and Equality to facilitate the opening of a service (details supplied) on a full-time basis, seven days and nights per week; her views on whether one night of respite care in a five-year period is acceptable; and if she will make a statement on the matter.”

Details supplied: Cúnamh Iveragh.

Dear Deputy Cahill,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to respond to your parliamentary question submitted to the Minister for Children, Disability and Equality.

The HSE and its funded agencies provide respite care for children and adults with disabilities. Respite can occur in a variety of settings and for various lengths of time, depending on the needs of the individual service user, their family or carer and according to available resources.

HSE South West Disability Services operates separate Regional Respite Forums for children’s respite and for adult respite. Each forum manages the referrals and respite service provision for the population of the region. The overall purpose of each forum is to ensure equitable access to respite services, consistent with each person’s assessed need and preference. Service provider representatives and South West Disability Services personnel comprise membership of the fora.

Cúnamh Iveragh Respite Care Centre, Cahersiveen, County Kerry is a HIQA registered respite service that currently operates on a part-time basis with



demand exceeding available capacity. The service opened in December 2023 and is operated by Dovidá (formerly Home Instead). The service provides overnight residential respite for adults with intellectual disability. The centre has a capacity of four beds and is open three nights a week for 42 weeks per year (excluding bank holiday weekends).

A business case to support funding and resource allocation for the permanent opening of Cúnamh Iveragh has been submitted to HSE South West and will be considered in the context of any development funding allocated to the region.

HSE South West Disability Services along with agencies under Section 38 and Section 39 of the Health Act continue to operate in a very competitive global market for healthcare talent, given the significant shortages of qualified healthcare professionals across the globe. Unfortunately, recruitment challenges are affecting full delivery of respite support to families. This is especially the case in rural areas.

HSE South West Disability Services and the relevant agencies are liaising on a continuous basis to alleviate any staffing shortages by maximising available staff resources across all services, by developing innovative approaches to recruitment and by effective operational planning.

HSE South West Disability Services is acutely aware of the demand for respite services and, on receipt of very welcome funding, has significantly invested in respite services in recent years. HSE South West continues to invest in respite services, proactively seek alternative respite models and utilise all available funding to provide respite services for all children and adults who require them. Disability Services are working with service providers to create new residential and alternative respite supports for children and adults in 2025/26 and welcomes any additional multi-annual funding to continue to invest in these vital services.

HSE South West Disability Services will investigate details of the case mentioned if the Deputy can provide the service user's identifying data (name, date of birth, postal address) and we will be happy to revert on same.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact my office.



Yours sincerely,

Ms. Angela O' Neill
Head of Disability Services,
HSE South West.