

11th November, 2024

Mr. Michael Healy-Rae, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2.

PQ ref 44140/24:

“To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth if there are plans to replace a childcare service (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter.”

Details supplied: “Minister I write on behalf of service users of Cois Na Feile in Listowel which has closed. Minister this place is used by over 200 clients and now they will have nowhere to go for respite. What is the government plan to replace this service which is needed urgently?”

Dear Deputy Healy-Rae,

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

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare (CKCH) and its funded agencies provide respite services for 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. Respite is not always centre-based and can be provided in a number of ways e.g. centre based, in-home, home-to-home, family support, outreach supports, and holiday breaks. This ensures that respite is provided in the manner which best meets the needs of the child/adult and their families. 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.

The provision of residential respite services has come under increasing pressure in the past number of years due to factors such as, an increase in the number of 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, and an increase in the age of people with a disability resulting in an increase in the peoples' care needs.

Respite services are available for adults who are aged 18 years to 65 years (at the age of entry) with a disability and whom satisfy the access criteria for CKCH Disability Services. Adults must be resident in Kerry and referrals are made via health and social care professionals and Client Services Managers (or equivalent) in the HSE or other relevant agencies.

Two types of respite services are provided; overnight respite and outreach supports.

Overnight Respite

There are two respite houses for adults in Kerry - Cois na Féile in Listowel (North Kerry) and Cúnamh Iveragh in Caherciveen (South Kerry).

Cois na Féile was operated by Kerry Parents and Friends Association (KPFA) since 2018. Cois na Féile provided four adult respite beds on a seven day per week basis. In January 2024 CKCH Disability Services met with the KPFA Board of Management to discuss their ongoing challenges securing staff for the respite house. At that meeting KPFA provided notice to CKCH of their intent to cease operating the service.

CKCH is undergoing a procurement process to identify a new service provider for the overnight respite service in Cois na Feile. The tendering process to identify an alternative provider to operate the Cois na Féile respite house is at an advanced stage. CKCH Disability Services remain committed to the re-commencement of the service as soon as possible.

CKCH Disability Services have worked to identify alternative interim supports for those impacted by the temporary closure. All those who requested alternative supports have been provided with a quantum and type of respite to meet their needs while awaiting the re-opening of the Cois na Féile respite house. CKCH Disability Services will continue to ensure all those impacted by the temporary closure of Cois na Féile respite house are provided with updates on this matter.

Cúnamh Iveragh, which opened in December 2023, has four bedrooms and is open three nights a week for 42 weeks per year (excluding bank holiday weekends). This is based on the current funding allocation. Cúnamh Iveragh is operated by Home



Instead. All persons residing in the catchment area of South Kerry and who were attending the North Kerry respite house will be offered a referral to Cúnamh Iveragh.

In addition to the two regional respite houses for Kerry there are an additional six beds for adult respite, four in Brook Lodge in Listowel, one in Tearmann Lodge in Rathmore and one in Glebe Lodge in Castleisland. These respite beds provided by KPFA are in place historically and provide supports for adults attending KPFA services.

Outreach Supports

Outreach/ in-home support is operated via a block system. Adults receive either four hours of support for twelve weeks followed by a twelve week break or four hours per week for eight weeks followed by an eight week break. This provides families with two or three blocks of support per annum (dependent on the type chosen).

Fifty four adults are currently in receipt of or due to commence outreach support and thirteen adults have been discharged from the service at their request. The service is open to further referrals.

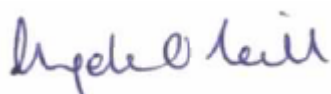
Outreach support is also provided on an ongoing basis and on a once off basis to facilitate an adult or family where a specific need is identified. This is subject to funding availability.

The CKCH Disability team 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.

CKCH continues to invest in respite services, proactively seeks alternative respite models, and utilise all available funding to provide respite services for all children and adults who require them. CKCH welcomes any funding to continue to invest in these vital services.

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,
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare.

