

26th September, 2024

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

PQ ref 37019/24

“To ask the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth if the supports available to the elderly parents of children with special needs (Details supplied) will be examined; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”

Detail Supplied: Respite and Full time residential care places in Kerry and particularly in the North Kerry region.

Dear Deputy Healy-Rae,

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare (CKCH) has been requested to reply to the above Parliamentary Question which you submitted to the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth for response.

Adult Residential Services

CKCH Disability Services established an Adult Residential Forum whereby existing and emerging residential vacancies are identified throughout Cork and Kerry. All requests for a residential placement are recorded and managed through the Adult Residential Forum. Cases are referred to the Forum for assessment of suitability. A system called the Disability Support Application Management Tool (DSAMT) is used which serves to ensure that the application process is equitable and transparent.

It is regrettable that the demand for placements in Cork and Kerry exceed supply. Funding to further develop services in CKCH has not been allocated and as a result capacity to expand the number of placements in Cork and Kerry has not been possible. We recognise the impact this has on people and their families. Should funding be allocated, CKCH Disability Services will work to expand the number of residential placements in Cork and Kerry.

It is an unfortunate reality within this area of service that the number of applicants for residential placements exceeds available capacity - and in this context, decision making on the allocation of placements is informed by the prioritisation of assessed clinical needs, the complexity of cases and the support needs of applicants, as well as the existing residents and the funding available. There are approximately 600 people awaiting/requiring residential services in Cork Kerry Community Healthcare at present.

Unfortunately, Disability Services within Cork and Kerry continues to operate in the context of very challenging circumstances – including availability of resources such as personnel, therapists, facilities and available accommodation for residential placements in appropriate settings.

Adult Respite Services

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 Cork Kerry Community Healthcare (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 opened in 2018 and was operated by Kerry Parents and Friends Association (KPFA). Cois na Féile provided four adult respite beds on a seven day 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 has commenced a procurement process to identify a new service provider for the overnight respite service in Cois na Féile and is committed to ensuring the service recommences as soon as possible. This service will be published for public tendering the last week of September 2024. In the interim, CKCH is providing alternative respite for the adults with disabilities and their families impacted by the short term closure of the service.

Cúnamh Iveragh opened in December 2023 and is operated by Home Instead. Cúnamh Iveragh provides four adult respite beds three nights a week for 42 weeks per year (excluding bank holiday weekends).

In addition to the two respite houses there are an additional three services providing beds for adult respite in Kerry. There are four beds in Brook Lodge in Listowel, one bed in Tearmann Lodge in Rathmore and one bed in Glebe Lodge in Castleisland. The 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 4 hours of support for 12 weeks followed by a 12 week break or 4 hours per week for 8 weeks followed by an 8 week break. This provides families with 2 or 3 blocks of support per annum (dependent on the type chosen). 42 adults are currently in receipt of or due to commence outreach support and 13 adults have been discharged from the service at their request. The service is open to further referrals.

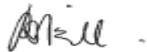


Outreach support is also provided on an ongoing basis and on a once off basis to facilitate an adult or family where a specific need is identified. This is subject to funding availability.

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare (CKCH) 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 seek alternative respite models and utilise all available funding to provide respite services for all children and adults who require them. CKCH are working with service providers to create new residential and alternative respite supports for children and adults in 2024 and welcomes additional funding to continue to invest in these vital services.

If I can be of further assistance please do not hesitate to contact the office.

Yours sincerely,



Patricia O'Neill
A/ Head of Disability Services
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare

