



30<sup>th</sup> January 2025

John Brady TD,  
Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2

**Re: PQ Ref: “ To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the current status of respite services previously provided at St Catherine’s, Newcastle, County Wicklow (details supplied) which was suspended by the HSE in October 2024 pending the securing of an alternative”**

***Details Supplied: the Bramble***

Dear Deputy Brady,

Thank you for your recent correspondence. The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply to you in the context of the above Representation. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the current position.

The respite service in Brambles Respite house in St Catherine’s has been paused for a number of months to facilitate an emergency residential situation that arose within St Catherine’s. This decision was made having explored all options and alternatives, and the HSE recognise the significant impact it has on those affected.

Due to statutory obligations, the HSE were required to take over the operation of another service to ensure continuity of care, which entailed utilising the Brambles respite house. We are committed to resolving the situation as quickly as possible.

Following liaison with families affected by the pause in respite from Brambles, the HSE sought alternative overnight respite for children as requested. These children were assessed, and transitioned, to overnight respite with a private agency; HSE Disability Services sought to offer families respite allocation equivalent to the respite offered in St Catherine’s Brambles.

- a) 11 families requested an alternative provider for overnight respite.  
All have been referred, of these 3 have commenced in respite, 2 declined and have been referred elsewhere, 3 are transitioning, 1 family not engaging, 2 awaiting assessment with additional provider.
- b) 6 families requested day respite sessions. All have been offered these through St Catherine’s and Sánas Alternative Respite.
- c) 1 family has not engaged.

The HSE continues to work with St Catherine’s to ensure continuity of supports for those children whose families requested additional Day Respite through St Catherine’s and Sanas Wicklow.



The HSE had hoped to have a resolution by the end of January, however indications are that it will take a number of additional weeks.

All alternative arrangements will remain in place, and we will be writing to families to advise of same. Please be assured of our commitment to resolve this matter as soon as possible.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Anna Meegan'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

**Anna Meegan**  
**General Manager**  
**Disability Services**