

4<sup>th</sup> February 2025

Mr. Michael Cahill, TD.,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Dublin 2

**PQ ref 46640/24**

**“To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the plans he has in place to address the shocking respite care services in County Kerry, especially for those individuals with special needs; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”**

Dear Deputy Cahill,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply to you in the context of the above parliamentary question, which you submitted to the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth for response.

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.

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare (CKCH) Disability Services operates separate Children and Adult Regional Respite Forums. 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 CKCH personnel comprise membership of the fora.

### **Children's Residential Respite Services:**

Kerry residential respite services for children aged between 6 and 18 years of age is delivered by St. John of God Services. There are two residential respite houses, one in North Kerry and one in South Kerry. Each house has 4 respite beds and operates 7 days per week with planned closures during the year.

## **Adult Residential Respite Services:**

Kerry residential respite services for adults who are aged 18 years to 65 years (at the age of entry) is delivered in two respite houses, one in North Kerry and one in South Kerry.

There are two respite houses for adults in Kerry; Cois na Féile in Listowel (North Kerry) and Cúnamh Iveragh in Caherciveen (South Kerry). Cúnamh Iveragh opened in December 2023.

**Cois na Féile** – A tendering process to identify a new provider for this respite house is nearing completion. It is anticipated the service will reopen prior to the end of March 2025. CKCH Disability Services are providing alternative interim respite supports for those impacted by the temporary closure.

**Cúnamh Iveragh** – Operated by Home Instead, has four beds and is open three nights a week for 42 weeks per year (excluding bank holiday weekends).

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
- one in Glebe Lodge in Castleisland.

These historical respite beds provided by Kerry Parents and Friends Association provide supports for adults attending KPFA services.

## **Alternative Respite Services:**

Respite is not always overnight and can be provided in a number of ways including centre based *Day Only Respite*. Respite is a vital part of the continuum of services for families, potentially helping to prevent out-of-home full-time residential placements, preserving the family unit, and supporting family stability.

CKCH provides a range of alternative respite models for children and adults. These include afterschool clubs, in home support for children, outreach supports and holiday breaks for adults. This ensures that respite is provided in the manner which best meets the needs of the child/ adult and their families.

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 is working with service providers to create new



residential and alternative respite supports for children and adults and welcomes any additional funding to continue to invest in these vital services.

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

Yours sincerely,



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**Angela O'Neill**  
**Head of Disability Services**  
**Cork Kerry Community Healthcare**

