



Design Team Brief

**Ballydribbeen New Build
Respite for Adults with Disabilities**

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1. Background

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has committed to providing 900 additional residential care and supported independent living places between 2024 and 2026. This commitment forms part of Action A8.1 of the Action Plan for Disability Services 2024–2026, which seeks to build sustainable residential care and supported living capacity. The long-term objective of the Action Plan is to reach a position where an appropriate residential place is available, over time, to any adult with a complex disability who requires and wishes to access such accommodation.

The HSE is committed to expanding the annual number of residential places provided in community-based residences, with a view to moving away from the provision of residential care places on an emergency basis when there is a family crisis or on the death of a parent, towards a program of planned forward provision of community-based residential places to meet the needs of people with complex disabilities. This is particularly relevant to those living with ageing parents, where respite accommodation can offer significant support.

Currently the State is buying residential care places in emergency situations from for-profit providers, who are the only sector that has sufficient spare, HIQA-approved, capacity. At the end of a short number of years, the provider may have paid off the mortgage on the premises, but the State has no ownership rights to it. Planned delivery of residential care places can secure better value in terms of the capital and running costs of individual places. Suitable legal agreements can be made in a planned way which retain the premises in the disability sector and provides a line for the State in proportion to its funding input.

2. Summary of Service Need

2.1 Current Residential Support Needs

Disability Services confirms that there are currently approximately 600 people awaiting/ requiring residential services in Cork and Kerry. This is a significant Need which the Service is unable to meet – although there is continuing effort to increase residential capacity, this project would increase supports to both residential and outreach Service users by way of Respite in a short timeframe.

2.2 Projected Demand & Service Gaps

The Disability Capacity Review published in 2021 projects a substantial increase in residential needs. Based on the population of HSE South West, an additional 285 - 585 residential places will be required in the region by 2032 to meet both demographic demand and current unmet needs.

2.3 Respite Service Shortfall

The Disability Capacity Review to 2032 highlights a critical gap in Respite Services citing that, in 2017, only one in four family carers of children aged over five with an intellectual disability had received any Respite. Similarly, only one in three family carers of adults had received Respite.

2.4 Resultant Impact on Acute Care

The shortage of suitable home care packages, Respite Services, and Residential Services (including emergency Respite) is having a direct impact on increase admissions to Emergency Department and causing delayed discharges from Acute Hospital settings for People with Disabilities.

2.5 Urgent & Transitional Placements

There are insufficient resources to respond to the unforeseen emergency cases and there are no emergency placements available at short notice in Cork / Kerry.

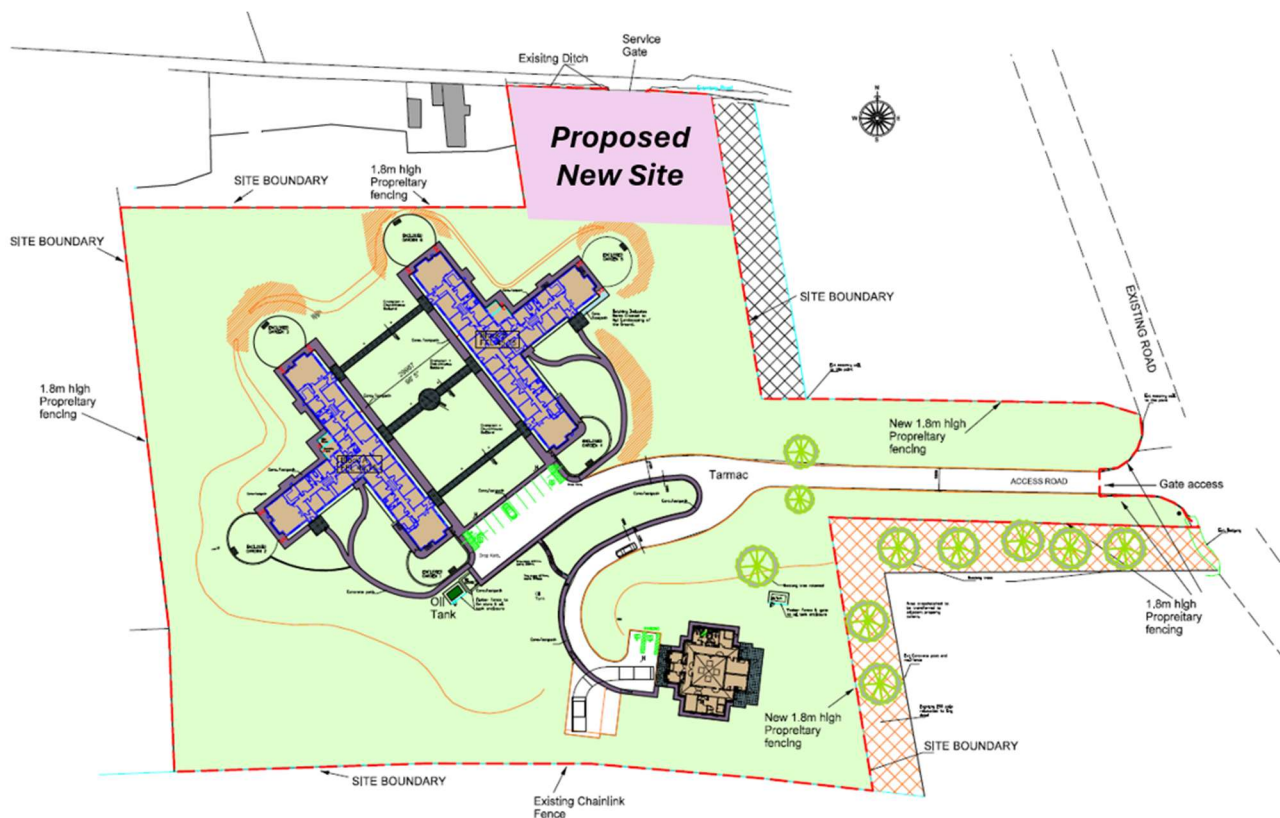
3. Proposed Project

The proposal is to build a purpose built 4 bed respite house for Adults with Disabilities in the Killarney area. HSE Estates have identified a site of approximately 0.5 acre on the HSE owned Cluain Fhionnain grounds in Ballydribbeen, Killarney.

3.1 Project Location

The proposed site is located on the North West corner of the HSE owned Cluain Fhionnain grounds in Ballydribbeen. It is directly opposite Killarney Legion GAA Club and approximately 1.5km walk to the centre of Killarney town.

Cluain Fhionnain was opened in 2001 to accommodate residents from the now closed St Finan's Hospital who had an established history of institutionalised living. In line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the national Transforming Lives Policy these congregated settings were phased out over the past decade.



4. Design Considerations

4.1 Spatial Sequencing & Sensory Zoning

Spaces should be arranged in a clear and logical sequence to support comprehension, reduce cognitive load, and minimise sensory overwhelm. Sensory zoning should organise spaces by levels of stimulus, with transitional zones enabling gradual changes in sound, light, and activity. This approach supports emotional regulation and reduces stress.

4.2 Provision of a Self-Contained Apartment

Accommodation must allow for escalation of support, including the ability to isolate a self-contained apartment from the rest of the residence if required. Residences without this facility are forced to operate at a greatly reduced capacity when caring for a client who does not interact well with others.

4.3 Provision of a Bariatric Bedroom

Service has requested that one bedroom in each residence be fully bariatric care capable. This will include the provision of specialist hoist linked from bedroom to bathroom and larger wheelchair circulation areas.

4.4 Access to Nature

Wherever possible Residents should have access to private or semi-private external spaces from their accommodation. Daylight and outward views support orientation and circadian rhythms.

4.5 Adaptability

The buildings should be designed to adapt to a range of user requirements over time, including the needs of both adults and children. Adaptability should be embedded within layouts, room sizes, and building systems to support changes in occupancy, care models, or levels of support.

4.6 Fire Safety

Both the refurb and the new build will be built to comply with modern standards and in accordance with the “code of practice for fire safety in new and existing community dwelling houses”.

4.7 Regularity Compliance

The Design Team shall develop the proposed respite facilities in accordance with all applicable Irish Building Regulations, Technical Guidance Documents, Building Control Regulations, Fire Safety legislation, accessibility requirements, Health and Safety legislation, HIQA requirements and relevant HSE standards and guidance. The Design Team shall identify at feasibility/design stage all statutory approvals, certificates, registrations and inspections required to bring the facilities into operational use.

4.8 Energy & Carbon Performance

The proposed developments shall comply with all current statutory requirements, including Part L of the Building Regulations and the Nearly Zero Energy Building (NZEB) requirements. In addition, the development shall comply with the current HSE Capital & Estates Energy Efficient Design requirements.

5. Scope of Works

The works will involve but not be limited to:

- Full feasibility and pre planning works
- Planning permission & statutory applications including all required environmental & technical reports associated with same
- Utility applications and coordination
- Proposed building to be carried out to HSE Estates Sustainable Healthcare Building Guidelines.
- Building to achieve no less than A2 BER Rating.
- The design team should consider and propose appropriate landscaping, external lighting and planting etc.
- Materials should appear domestic but provide robustness.
- All fitments should be considered and designed to provide a domestic aesthetic but be robust in nature.

6. Schedule of Rooms

Ballydribbeen New Build Schedule of Accommodation				
	Room Name	Quantity	Size	Total Area
Private	Single Bedroom	2	18.5	37
	Ensuite	2	6	12
	Bariatric Bedroom	1	22.5	22.5
	Bariatric Ensuit	1	8.5	8.5
	Self-Contained Apartment	1	45	45
Communal	Sitting Room	1	14	14
	Activity/Family Room	1	12	12
	Quiet Room	1	12	12
	Dining Area	1	12	12
	Accessible WC	1	5	5
	Kitchen	1	12.5	12.5
Staff/Admin	Staff Rest Room	1	12	12
	Staff WC	1	2.5	2.5
	Utility	1	4	4
	Equipment & Cleaning	1	8	8
	Office	1	6	6
	Sluice Room	1	6	6
	Clinical Storeroom	1	6	6
	Linen Store	1	4	4
			Total	241

Allow 15% circulation space	277
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