

Questions:

1. During the financial year 2025/2026 has any of the health and social care trusts filed a business case to increase overnight respite (short break) facilities for children?
2. If so which Trusts have filed same.
3. If so which projects were granted funding.
4. If so which of these projects has been progressed to completion by the Trusts.
5. During the financial year 2025/2026 has any of the health and social care trusts filed a business case to increase residential provision for children with challenging behaviour/learning disability?
6. If so which Trusts have filed same.
7. If so which projects were granted funding.
8. If so which of these projects has been progressed to completion by the Trusts.

Responses:

1. Funding in respect of children with disabilities (CWD) was approved by the Minister in October 2023. With regard to the CWD Ministerial Investment (Including the Regional Case for Non-Recurrent Proposals) - the five Trusts had confirmed final funding requirements for the 2025/26 year across a range of proposals.

The amount of funding (rounded) provided per Trust was as follows:

- Belfast Trust - £2.2 million;
- Northern Trust - £1.4 million;
- South Eastern Trust - £2.1 million;
- Southern Trust - £1.4 million; and
- Western Trust - £2.2 million.

This amounts to a total of approximately £9.4 million investment in services for children with disabilities in 2025/26 from the Ministerial Investment. This was to be used to support children with disability, including enhancing the provision of overnight respite, including additional overnight short breaks from community and voluntary providers.

The five HSC Trusts have submitted business cases for a share of this investment. A business case submitted by the Western Trust for recurrent funding was approved in 2025/26, with SPPG currently working with the remaining 4 Trusts to finalise and agree services and associated recurrent funding.

Interim funding approvals were granted in respect of 2025/26 expenditure in this area, pending the finalisation of recurrent business cases and associated recurrent funding approvals.

2. All 5 Trusts have submitted Business Cases.
3. The Regional Business Case in respect of Non-Recurrent Proposals for CWD was filed and completed in 2025/26, and funding distributed across Trusts for a range of initiatives to enhance the Children with Disabilities Services.

All of the projects at Point 4 have been supported during 2025/26.

4. There are a wide range of initiatives and service developments both in progress and in place to enhance service provision for Children with Disability. The above projects were completed during 2025/26.

Across the five HSC Trusts, the CWD initiatives range from, but are not limited to:

- Development and Expansion of Voluntary & Community Contracts to provide opportunities for attendance for young people with disabilities at youth clubs, after school clubs and weekend clubs.
- Cash Grants and Vouchers to provide support to families.
- Development and Expansion of Fostering Short Breaks Services.
- Development & Enhancement of Edge of Care Services to provide support to families at times of significant stress and need.
- Expansion of Short Breaks and Residential Care Services.
- Development of Multi-Disciplinary Teams to include Allied Health Professionals and Learning Disability Nurses.
- Development of Strengths-Based Parent's Support Programs. When families are supported early and consistently, children are more likely to reach their potential, reducing the long-term reliance on intensive services.

Table 1 lists a summary of the projects relating to overnight short break enhancements that have been received from Trusts in 2025/26 as part of the CWD Investment.

There are a range of additional proposals for each Trust in terms of day short break provision, recruitment activity, and activity to enhance overall service provision.

Please also note that in addition to the below, all five Trusts are also developing / enhancing a Short Break Fostering Service to provide overnight fostering short breaks.

Table 1:

Trust	Project Description
BHSCT	1. Development of a Bespoke Temporary Short Break Home within an existing Trust Facility.
NHSCT	1. Re-opening Short Break Beds within an existing Short Break Home. 2. NI Hospice – used for overnight short break provision in 2025/26 – part of the Trust’s underspend / non-recurrent proposals.
SEHSCT	1. Expansion of Short Break provision within an existing short break home. 2. Expansion of the Trust’s Outreach Service – this also provided some overnight Short Breaks in 2025/26.
SHSCT	1. Increase of provision of Short Breaks in existing Short Break Homes. 2. Increase in Community Contracts - Short Break overnights provided via a Community Organisations. 3. Increase the Number of Fee Paid Short Break Carers. 4. NI Hospice – used for overnight short break provision in 2025/26 – part of the Trust’s underspend / non-recurrent proposals.
WHSCT	1. NI Hospice to support overnight short break provision in 2025 / 26. 2. Community Sector Service – increasing overnight short break option for Trust.

5. The Ministerial funding has been ring fenced to increase the provision of short breaks for families, which does not include Residential Provision.

As noted above, CWD funding was provided to all five Trusts in 2025/26. Separately from the Ministerial funding, two Trusts submitted Business Cases for Residential Provision during 2025/26. These are outlined in Point 6.

6. Table 2 lists the business cases received from Trusts.

Table 2:

Trust	Project Description
SEHSCT	Proposal To Create A Bespoke CWD Residential Facility x 3 Separate Business Cases.
SEHSCT	Proposal - Residential Home For Children with Disabilities.
SEHSCT	Proposal - Children’s Disability Homes Staffing Restructuring To Enhance Existing Staffing Across Disability Homes.
NHSCT	Proposal – Children with Disabilities Pressures – Funding Request For Existing Residential & Residential Short Break Home.

The South Eastern HSC Trust Business Cases as outlined above were not approved for funding due to the current financial constraints. The Northern HSC Trust Business Case did not receive approval in 25/26, and remains under consideration.

In addition, to the above – the below table 3 outlines a summary of some of the CWD Investment Proposals from Trusts in 2025/26 relating to residential:

Table 3:

Trust	Project Description
BHSCT	1. Funding used to maintain a current CWD residential facility, due to increasing pressures. 2. Supporting a newly established residential facility for CWD. 3. Supporting a bespoke residential placement for CWD.
NHSCT	1. Recruitment for CWD Residential Care.
SEHSCT	1. Recruitment for CWD Residential Care. 2. Non-Recurrent proposals preparation and staffing of new CWD residential home.
SHSCT	1. Expand residential support in existing residential facility via In-Reach / Outreach (recruitment stage).
WHSCT	1. Supporting Staffing within current Residential Facilities.

7. The proposals from Trusts in 2025/26 outlined in Table 3 have been supported during 2025/26.
8. The CWD Investment proposals from Trusts in 2025/26 in Table 3 have been supported during 2025/26.

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