

Press release

Minister for Health announces €5 million in funding for Daisy Lodge therapeutic centre for children with cancer and their families

From [Department of Health \(/en/organisation/departments-of-health/\)](/en/organisation/departments-of-health/)

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- the new centre will be located in Cong, Co Mayo, and will be run by the Cancer Fund for Children
- €5 million in funding from the Department of Health will be combined with €2.5 million in Shared Island funding, as the centre will cater to children from Ireland and Northern Ireland

Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly has today announced that he will allocate €5 million in capital funding for the construction of a new Daisy Lodge therapeutic short break centre built in in Cong, Co Mayo for children with cancer and their families.

This funding will be combined with €2.5 million in funding from the Shared Island Fund, which was also approved by Government today, for a total of €7.5 million in funding for the project. The remainder of the funding for the project will be raised through charitable donations.

Cancer Fund for Children (CFFC) has run Daisy Lodge in Newcastle in County Down since 2014, and the second centre will offer the same support services in a new location. The new centre will welcome families from both Ireland and Northern Ireland for free short breaks. Children with cancer will be referred to the new centre by the charity's

team of Cancer Support Specialists, working across Ireland, and in some of the hospitals in both jurisdictions. The existing centre in Co Down can facilitate 1,800 family members per year, and the new Daisy Lodge will increase this number to 4,000 per year.

Speaking about the €5 million allocation, the Minister for Health said:

"I'm delighted that we are able to support Cancer Fund for Children with this funding for a second Daisy Lodge therapeutic centre. The centre will establish a vital service based in the West of Ireland for children with cancer and their families to be able to relax and enjoy time together with their families and with other children who are going through a similar experience. Our National Cancer Strategy recognises the important role played by the voluntary and charity sector in providing cancer support services. Cancer Fund for Children already have strong links across this voluntary and community sector, including dedicated cancer centres with formalised links with the National Children's Cancer Service in Crumlin, to ensure a dedicated referral pathway to services like Daisy Lodge."

The CEO of Cancer Fund for Children, Mr Phil Alexander, said:

"I would like to thank the Minister for Health and the department for supporting Cancer Fund for Children and helping us to deliver on our mission - to ensure that no child or young person aged 0-24 across the island of Ireland has to face cancer alone."

"A childhood cancer diagnosis and its treatment can have a devastating impact on the whole family. Life as they once knew it is shattered. Beyond the excellent clinical care families receive there is a huge need for social and emotional support. Therapeutic short breaks at Daisy Lodge provide a safe, restorative space where children with cancer, their siblings and parents can reconnect, spend quality time together, meet other families and benefit from the support of our dedicated therapeutic team."

"As we can only provide therapeutic short breaks to one in every seven families across the island, a second Daisy Lodge will be transformational in helping to ensure every family impacted by childhood cancer across the island can access our support. Construction will commence in January 2024 and we are truly grateful to the Department of Health for helping make this possible."

Notes

Find out more about Cancer Fund for Children: <https://cancerfundforchildren.com/>
(<https://cancerfundforchildren.com/>).

Daisy Lodge, Cong, County Mayo

The proposal by the Cancer Fund for Children is for the construction of a 30,000 square foot Daisy Lodge short break centre for children diagnosed with cancer and their families, similar to an existing centre in County Down, with part-funding to be provided through the Shared Island Fund.

This will be a non-clinical facility for children diagnosed with cancer, and complement the existing successful service provided by CFFC at Daisy Lodge, in Newcastle, County Down. The new centre in Cong will enable CFFC to increase the number of children and parents it supports on the island each year from 1,800 to 4,000.

Funding will be allocated in 2024 and construction is expected to commence next year. The project is expected to take 18 months to complete.

Cancer Fund for Children have committed that the new centre will welcome 70% of visitors from Ireland and 30% of visitors from Northern Ireland, and that their existing centre in County Down will welcome 70% of visitors from Northern Ireland and 30% from Ireland.

Families who are staying at the Daisy Lodge centre either in May or June for a second time will be encouraged to stay in the second centre. Cancer Fund for Children view this arrangement as an opportunity for children and their families from different communities on the island to share an experience together.

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