

30<sup>th</sup> April 2019

Deputy Stephen Donnelly, T.D.,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Dublin 2

**PQ ref 17297/19**

**“To ask the Minister for Health the reason a residential centre for autism (details supplied) in County Kerry has not been opened five years after it was finished.”**

**Details supplied: Dromavalla, Ballyseedy, Tralee**

Dear Deputy Donnelly,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

The centre in question is a ten-bedded house located at Ballyseedy, Tralee, Co. Kerry and is owned by the Irish Society for Autism. Funding was received through the Capital Assistance Scheme (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government) as housing for people with a disability. This facility was developed by the Irish Society for Autism, without discussions with the HSE/Cork Kerry Community Healthcare or without any commitment from the HSE to fund a service for this centre.

The current HSE policy on residential services for people with a disability is that no more than four persons should be accommodated in any one unit. This is to avoid the institutionalisation of care delivered in any setting. As a ten bedded facility, this house is not in line with HSE policy on residential settings, which has been in place since 2010.

While we were not involved in the planning of this specific facility and would not support an accommodation proposal for ten people, we nevertheless recognise the need to provide residential care for people with a disability, including people with autism. However, neither the HSE nor Cork Kerry Community Healthcare has received additional funding in recent years to develop additional residential places in a planned and systematic way. We have received an indicative financial allocation of €1.67m in respect of emergency cases for 2019. This allocation will be used to meet urgent crisis needs for residential care, for additional home supports as an alternative to residential care, or to provide additional supports where people in residential care have increased needs and cannot continue to be supported within that setting with the current level of supports.

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare continues to receive a large volume of applications for funding of supports on an on-going basis. The known level of need currently exceeds the funding available. This funding will be prioritised towards the cases of greatest need. This deficit reflects the growing population of people with disabilities, longer life expectancy and more complex needs presenting, along with the lack of structured investment in residential and home supports over a number of years.

It is clear at this stage that sufficient funding has not been provided to the HSE at National Level to meet the level of needs that exist among people with disabilities for residential care. Information on the numbers who need services has been given to the Department of Health and the Department of Expenditure and Public Reform in recent years.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Seamus Doherty". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

**General Manager  
Disability Services  
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare**

