

26th April 2019

Deputy Martin Ferris
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ Number: 17910 /19

“To ask the Minister for Health the measures being put in place to rectify issues with sewerage at Deer Lodge mental health unit, Killarney, County Kerry, which is causing distress for both staff and patients; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”

Dear Deputy Ferris,

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

Deer Lodge Mental Health Recovery Unit was opened in July 2017 following the closure of the O'Connor Unit, St. Finan's Hospital. The 40-bed unit for adults has been built to a very high standard and was designed to provide quality recovery orientated care, integrated with health and personal care using a recovery model, in partnership with the Service User.

The building is in four individual households which are all connected through a central module that features a communal area, therapy areas, entrance, foyer, prayer room and other facilities. Each household has access to an internal landscaped garden area.

Since the opening of the unit, staff and service users have reported an unpleasant odour emanating from the drains on an intermittent basis in some parts of the building. Management in Kerry Mental Health Services, in conjunction with HSE Estates, have undertaken a number of independent assessments of the issue and progressed a number of remedial works in an attempt to eliminate the problem. These included the following;

- Air quality monitoring survey conducted by the Fire & Safety Officer –air quality deemed to be non-hazardous. The tests concluded that the concentration of the contaminants in the working atmosphere was such as to present a nuisance odour but no significant health hazard.
- CCTV inspection of foul system - a number of non-biodegradable items found to be blocking the drains.

- Survey of soil and vent pipes in the building – all found to be in good working order
- Schedule of flushing of taps trialled on recommendation of Irish Drains following a report that highlighted the lack of water in the drainage system.
- Auto flush units installed in two rooms – one in River View and one in Mountain View
- KMS are on-site conducting a full survey of seals throughout the building. A number of cracked seals have been identified and have been replaced. These works are expected to be complete by the end of April 2019 and we are optimistic that this will result in an end to the odour issue.

Contractors are currently addressing issues in specific parts of the building at the moment and we expect this issue to be resolved shortly. We are committed to ensuring that Staff and Service Users are provided with a safe, comfortable environment and will work with our colleagues in HSE Estates Department to ensure that this issue is monitored and reviewed.

I trust this clarifies the query raised.

Kind regards,



Mr Kevin Morrison
General Manager
Mental Health Services
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare