



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oibríochtaí Meabhairshláinte
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4th June 2019

Deputy Peter Burke TD
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street
Dublin 2.

PQ 22973 19 Question: To ask the Minister for Health if it is policy not to provide low or medium support hostel accommodation for persons with mental health issues; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Peter Burke

Dear Deputy Burke,

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. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

From a HSE perspective there is no policy not to provide low or medium supported accommodation for people with mental illness. The HSE owns and/or leases a number of properties in the provision of low and medium support accommodation for service users who would otherwise be a risk of homelessness once discharged from approved centres and/or who require additional clinical supports to successfully rehabilitate into the community from a hospital setting.

The HSE is currently working in partnership with the Housing Agency to implement the Housing Strategy for People with a Disability (2011-2016; extended to 2020).

The Government's National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability was published in October 2011 jointly by the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government and the Department of Health. The strategy comprises 9 strategic aims and covers the period originally up to 2016, which had now been extended to 2020. The publication of the Strategy was followed in July 2012 with the publication of an Implementation Framework that broke the 9 Strategic Aims into 80 Priority Actions. The Priority Actions outline the detailed measures to assist in addressing effectively the housing and related support needs of people with disabilities.

STRATEGIC AIM 5 relates to the housing needs of people with mental health difficulties. The aim gives effect to the housing commitments contained in the Government's mental health policy, A Vision for Change, in relation to meeting the housing needs of people with mental health difficulties, who have



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low and medium support needs, within communities. In recognition of the complex nature of a mental health difficulty, a range of targeted responses are required to facilitate individuals to maintain housing and support independent living.

Within the Housing Strategy, the detail of how this action is to be achieved is outlined in more detail in 5 Key Measures as follows:

5.3.1 The transitioning of people with low and medium support needs, from HSE mental health facilities to more appropriate community based arrangements, will be supported through an effective inter agency management structure, in line with a person centred planning approach and individual choice.

5.3.2 The transfer of low and medium support HSE community residences to the ownership and management of local authorities will be progressed in line with agreed structures and timelines, informed by the outcomes of a conditions survey to be undertaken by the Housing Agency.

5.3.3 The transitioning process will be underpinned by commitments from the HSE to the ongoing provision of relevant mental health supports, to people with low and medium support needs, within new community arrangements. These supports will be delivered through multidisciplinary community mental health teams and appropriate protocols will be developed.

5.3.4 The proposals for the transitioning of people with low and medium support needs from HSE mental health facilities will be supported by all relevant agencies involved in the delivery of services to people with disabilities.

5.3.5 People currently residing in low and medium support community residences, which will transfer to the ownership of housing authorities, will be supported to achieve more independent living arrangements, where their support needs lessen.

The programme of work to transition low and medium HSE owned low and medium support residents and properties commenced in late 2014 and is being rolled out across the country. Where properties transfer from HSE ownership, usually to Approved Housing Bodies (AHB's), they are surveyed and where required, works are carried out to bring them up to rental standards in terms of the conditions of the building. Residents that transfer are provided with individual tenancy agreements with the AHB (landlord). In addition, the AHB employs Tenancy Support Officers who work alongside the HSE community clinical teams to provide a community support plan which addresses the housing/tenancy supports required by the individual as well as the clinical needs to be provided by the HSE. These support packages ensure that tenants who have current and ongoing enduring mental health problems and that have required secondary (specialist community mental health interventions) and possibly



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tertiary (in-patient mental health placements) care services are successfully transitioned and supported to live in the community within a property that they can call their home while having the legal protections provided through a tenancy agreement with an AHB.

I trust this information is of assistance to you but should you have any further queries please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sinead Reynolds'.

Dr Sinead Reynolds
General Manager Mental Health Services