



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

Head of Service - Older People  
South East Community Healthcare  
Lacken, Dublin Road  
Kilkenny  
R95NV08

27<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Mr. Alan Kelly T.D.  
Dail Eireann  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2

**PQ 14992/20 To ask the Minister for Health if and when St. Brigid's Hospital, Carrick-on-Suir will return to its normal service, that is, a geriatric facility; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

**PQ 14921/20**

**To ask the Minister for Health when St. Brigid's Hospital, Carrick-on-Suir will reopen as a unit for respite and palliative care.**

Dear Deputy Kelly,

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

*I have reviewed that matter and the following composite reply is the current position.*

In the current Covid-19 pandemic public health emergency, St. Brigid's has been designated as a "step down" Covid-19 care facility to serve the South Tipperary area. As the demand for Covid-19 step down beds was not required to the level as predicted during the initial Covid-19 pandemic, SECH utilised the staffing resource from St. Brigid's to meet competing demands and priorities in the South Tipperary area. There remains a critical requirement for staff elsewhere in community healthcare services at this time.


Interim arrangements are currently in place for patients requiring residential convalescent, emergency respite and palliative care to be accommodated elsewhere in the HSE's community healthcare services in the South Tipperary area.

However South East Community Healthcare is committed to the recovery of services in the South East and is currently examining the resumption of services relating to Older People which will include St. Brigid's Hospital. Our phased recovery planning will be in line with national HSE Guiding principles for reintroducing services in a Covid-19 environment. As services resume, public health guidance and social distancing requirements will have an inevitable impact on service capacity across the system and particularly in our residential and short stay inpatient units. There is also a requirement to ensure strict infection prevention and control measures across services.

The recovery plan will follow public health guidance and remain flexible to ensure the health of service users, their families and staff are protected. SECH will strive to ensure the most effective use of resources to meet the needs of the population of South Tipperary.

I trust that this is of assistance. Should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact this office.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara Murphy".

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**Ms. Barbara Murphy**  
**Head of Service for Older People, South East Community Healthcare**