

14th August 2020

Deputy Pa Daly, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ 20596/20:

“To ask the Minister for Health the number of day care centres in County Kerry that have now reopened; the number that will be reopened by September 2020; the number that will not be in a position to reopen by September 2020; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”

Dear Deputy Daly,

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.

Services for Older People

I wish to advise that preparatory work is on-going in advance of the reopening of Day Care Centres. A framework for the resumption of Day Care Services for Older People has been issued with guidance relating to the safe reopening of day services for older people. A risk assessment of services will be done locally and, if viable, day services will resume in the next few months where safe to do so and public health guidance can be maintained, regarding infection control and social distancing. A training session for Kerry Day Care Co-ordinators on this document is scheduled for late August.

Not all day services will be suitable for reopening due to the physical nature of the buildings. Once we know what services are unsuitable for reopening we will plan to deliver a service using alternative delivery models. Dates have not been finalised for the reopening of Day Care Centre but our priority is to open the services which are suitable without delay.

Mental Health Services

Mental Health Services in Cork Kerry Community Healthcare aim to promote and protect the mental health of the population and to provide effective services to those who need them. Mental Health Services work collaboratively with other Health and Social Care Services. Our services have a strong focus on recovery and co-production and have consistently sought to develop and enhance community based services and reduce, where appropriate, those treated in more acute services.

Services are provided through community mental health teams and these teams are supported by day hospitals, day centres, residential centres and community residences / high support hostels and inpatient units.

There are 9 Mental Health Day Centres in Kerry as follows:

1. Fertha View Day Centre, Caherciveen
2. Teach Mhuire Day Centre, Rathmore

3. Killarden House Day Centre, Tralee
4. Leewood Day Hospital, Killarney
5. Cois Abhainn Day Centre/Day Hospital, Listowel
6. Ard Alainn Day Centre, Killorglin
7. Fiachne Day Centre, Kenmare
8. Tearmann Day Centre, Dingle
9. Shanowen Day Centre, Castleisland

With regards to the situation in relation to Covid 19, considerable work has been underway and will continue across all parts of the service with regard to preparedness and response planning across the health sector.

Mental Health Services strive to offer the best patient outcomes and the best use of available resources to support our patient population and these efforts were continued during the difficult and challenging situation with regards to the Covid 19 pandemic. With this in mind, I can confirm that all of the above day centres remained open with the exception of Killarden House Day Centre which closed on 25th March 2020 as a direct result of the Covid 19 pandemic. Management within Kerry Mental Health Services are actively seeking an alternative location for this day centre and are currently exploring a number of options. In the interim clients are supported by phone and home visits and weather permitting, some clients meet for group walks three times a week.

It is noted that whilst all other day centres remained operational they done so with reduced attendance initially. A number of factors contributed to this including unavailability of public transport or the rural transport scheme and due to the fact that a significant number of attendees are over 70 and Public Health advice at the time was for over 70's to cocoon. There was also an obligation on staff to ensure that physical distancing requirements were adhered to and this necessitated restricting numbers attending at any one time.

The service continues to ensure that national guidelines in relation to Covid 19 are implemented and adhered to across all locations and I am informed by the local management team that in recent weeks, attendance rates have increased to near normal levels.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact either of the undersigned.

Yours sincerely,



Gabrielle O'Keeffe
Head of Services for Older People,
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare



Mr Kevin Morrison
Acting Head of Mental Health Services
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare