



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

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

29th June 2020

Mr. Mattie McGrath T.D.
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ 10500/20

To ask the Minister for Health the reason that Our Lady's Hospital, Cashel, County Tipperary has been deemed suitable for the resumption of inpatient accommodation in view of being informed over many years that it is not suitable for same; the works that have been carried out to make it suitable; the cost of the works; if the hospital will return to full inpatient accommodation following the recent works; his plans for the hospital in a post-Covid-19 environment; the reason persons have been informed it is not suitable for inpatient accommodation; if the hospital will be retained as a step-down facility to support capacity issues at South Tipperary General Hospital; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy McGrath,

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

I have reviewed that matter and the following is the position.

St. Patrick's Hospital in Cashel (and its associated facility at St. Anthony's Unit in Clonmel) is a South East Community Healthcare residential centre for older people and provides long stay, respite, dementia and rehabilitation services for South Tipperary.

To ensure the safety of the older people of South Tipperary that were living in St. Patrick's Hospital Cashel during the current Covid-19 public health emergency, in consultation with the independent regulatory body the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA), to maximise infection control measures, arrangements were made for residents and staff of St. Patrick's Hospital to move on an interim basis to accommodation and ancillary facilities established at the nearby former Our Lady's Hospital (hereafter referred to as OL) building in Cashel. Previous design work carried out at OL, following its closure in 2007, rendered it more adaptable to inpatient accommodation to modern standards which facilitated the move from St. Patrick's Hospital to meet infection control and regulatory requirements.

HBS Estates have advised that the following works were completed:

- Reconfigured bed layouts following reduction of bed numbers in multi-bed wards
- Improvements to toilets and en-suite accommodation
- Provision of new secure gardens for residents
- Upgraded fire safety measures
- Upgrade to medical gas, nurse-call, electrical and access control systems
- Upgrade of finishes including painting and redecoration

It is understood from HBS Estates that these works completed in OL are estimated to cost €500k (approximately).

On 8th June 2020 South East Community Healthcare completed the planned transfer of 49 residents from St. Patrick's Hospital to new facilities prepared at the former Our Lady's Hospital building in Cashel. This transfer from St. Patrick's was undertaken with the best interests of residents and staff in mind. The 26 bed St. Anne's/St. Bernadette's and 23 bed St. Benedict's wards at St. Patrick's Hospital have moved to the new accommodation and associated ancillary and recreational facilities in Our Lady's. HSE/South East Community Healthcare have liaised with staff representatives in respect of all arrangements being made in Cashel.

The present (21 bed) Rehabilitation Unit on site at St. Patrick's Hospital and (11 bed) St. Claire's Ward located on the grounds of Our Lady's Hospital are not affected by the transfer.

In turn, it is planned that available space at St. Patrick's will be utilised for some other services currently based in the main OL building in Cashel i.e. mainly Child Therapy Services.

With regards to possible use as a stepdown facility to support South Tipperary General Hospital (STGH), Acute Services have advised that as the OL Unit is occupied by long term residential care patients, there is no remit for it as a transitional unit to support STGH. However acute services have noted that STGH is well supported by the other Community Nursing Units in the area and that there is regular communication between the acute and community services. The STEP team for Older Persons continues to work across both services to improve the delivery of care to older patients in our community.

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

Yours sincerely,



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