



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

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2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020

Mr. Martin Browne T.D.  
Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
Dublin

**PQ 12366/20**

**To ask the Minister for Health if a mental health unit in Clonmel, County Tipperary will reopen as a dedicated mental health unit for the region; and if not, when appointments for outpatients are due to resume at the Department of Psychiatry in St. Luke's Hospital, Kilkenny and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Browne,

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:*

**Background:**

Following the judgment and Order of the High Court, admissions to St. Michael's Unit, South Tipperary General Hospital ceased on 5th June 2012 and the acute mental health inpatient services formerly provided at that Unit were transferred on a phased planned basis to the Acute In-patient Unit of the Department of Psychiatry at St. Luke's General Hospital, Kilkenny. St. Michael's Unit was officially closed on 16th July 2012 and since then all acute inpatient services are provided at the Acute In-patient Unit, Department of Psychiatry, St. Luke's Hospital Kilkenny which is the designated approved centre for the Carlow, Kilkenny and South Tipperary area. This enables all acute inpatient admissions to be managed at a single site.

The Department of Psychiatry, St Luke's Hospital, Kilkenny is a 44 bedded Mental Health Commission approved acute psychiatric unit.

The unit is registered subject to the compliance regulations of the Mental Health Act 2001 (approved centre) Regulations 2006. There are 45 WTE Nursing posts rostered to the Department of Psychiatry which is the agreed Mental Health Commission staffing requirement for a unit of this size.

**Mental Health Developments in South Tipperary**

Parallel to the planned closure of St. Michael's Unit, there have been a number of other significant developments in the implementation of a major Change Programme across Carlow/Kilkenny/South Tipperary - an essential transformation in the model and delivery of mental health services across the extended catchment area (in line with A Vision for Change and Mental Health Commission recommendations). A key priority for the HSE has been to shift the model of care from the old long stay institutions and reliance of inpatient settings of care to the development of a comprehensive community based service with services being provided in more appropriate settings.

## **Community Mental Health Developments in South Tipperary:**

- **Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs)** were amalgamated and enhanced with redeployment of additional nursing staff across Carlow/Kilkenny and South Tipperary Area.
- **Acute Day Services (Day Hospitals)** offer an alternative to inpatient admission for a proportion of service users. Two new Acute Day Services (Day Hospitals) were established in both Clonmel and Cashel. Joint multi-disciplinary assessments now take place in the Acute Day Services. Multidisciplinary Team Meetings (MDT) (involving Consultants, Nursing Staff (including nurse management), Allied Health Professionals) have re-located from St Michael's Unit to Acute Day Service base in Clonmel since 2nd July 2012.
- **South Tipperary Home Based Services** became operational on 31st October 2011 with the redeployment of nursing staff following the transfer of acute inpatient service for North Tipperary service users to the HSE West. A number of the nursing staff within the Home Based Service are qualified Nurse Prescribers. The Home Based Service for South Tipperary operates on a seven day per week basis (9am to 8.30pm). This enables service users to receive treatment in their own home environment and is providing an important alternative to acute inpatient care. An additional Clinical Nurse Manager Grade 2 post was redeployed to the Home Based Service from St Michael's Unit on 1st July 2012 with a key liaison role between the Department of Psychiatry Kilkenny and the Home Based Service. The Home Based Treatment Service work closely with the day hospital staff. The Consultant Psychiatrists in South Tipperary Mental Health Services are actively leading the HBTT service and all Home Based Service care plans and treatment decisions. All treatment delivered is in consultation and agreement with the relevant Consultant Psychiatrist.

There are also a number of dedicated mental health units in Clonmel, South Tipperary. The following are the services currently in place:

### **Community Nursing Unit - Haywood Lodge, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary (Continuing Care Services)**

Haywood Lodge is purpose built residential 40 bed community nursing unit operational from April 2012. This involved the relocation of patients and staff from old inappropriate long stay facilities in St Mary's and St Paul's Ward from St Luke's Psychiatric Hospital Clonmel. The unit is built to a very high specification based on a national design. Each resident has their own en-suite bedroom and access to outdoor garden areas and occupational activity. There has been very positive feedback from relatives of service users and from the Mental Health Commission during previous unannounced visit.

### **South Tipperary - Garryshane House (High Support Services)**

Garryshane House is a twelve bed High Support Hostel which opened on the 26th July 2012. The opening of this unit involved the redeployment of staff and residents from St. Teresa's Unit, St Luke's Hospital Clonmel. This facilitated the final transfer of remaining patients in the old St Luke's Hospital to the new purpose built unit thereby enabling the closure of the old psychiatric hospital (in line with recommendations from Mental Health Commission and Vision for Change). Each resident has an individualized care plan that involves active rehabilitation and recovery care elements.

**Crisis/Respite House - South Tipperary - Glenville House** (a temporary location while the permanent facility is provided) opened on 19th June 2012, following the cessation of admissions to St. Michael's Unit Clonmel on the 5th June 2012. The crisis/respite facility is used for crisis accommodation and acute respite purposes for a period of up to 72 hours. It offers an alternative to Acute Inpatient Care for a proportion of service users who would otherwise have been admitted to the acute hospital setting.

### **CAMHS - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services**

There are 2 CAMHS Teams in South Tipperary both of whom provide a range of community based mental health services to children and young people under the age of 18 yrs of age. CAMHS Team 2 became operational in 2014 - not fully populated in terms of staffing.

The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in-patient unit which provides in-patient care for children under the age of 18 years in South East Community Healthcare (CHO5) is situated at Eist Linn Child and Adolescent in-patient Unit, Bessborough, Blackrock, Cork. All service users from the South East Mental Health Services catchment area requiring in-patient care are referred to Eist Linn.

#### **Community Mental Health Centre/Base - South Tipperary Community Mental Health Centre**

The existing South Tipperary Community Mental Health Team (CMHT), Home Based Treatment Team and Acute Day Services (Day Hospital) relocated to the newly purpose built permanent location South Tipperary Community Mental Health Centre which became operational on 24th September 2012. This facilitates the co-location and further enhancement of these services. It supports the ongoing continued development of comprehensive Community Mental Health Service with a single point of access.

#### **Development of Mental Health Service in Emergency Department, South Tipperary General Hospital**

Rooms were constructed off the main corridor of the Emergency Department in South Tipperary General Hospital during 2012 which became operational in November 2012. This unit allows for mental health assessments to be conducted in an appropriate environment and complies with College of Psychiatry of Ireland requirements. In addition to the continuation of the Emergency Department Mental Health Liaison Nurse post (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) an additional Clinical Nurse Specialist Mental Health (CNS) role was introduced on an interim basis with effect from 13th July 2012 (to replace on call). This service provides out of hours cover (8.30pm to 8am, 7 days per week) and is being kept under review. The Clinical Nurse Specialist also provides Liaison Consultation to South Tipperary General Hospital at night. All presentations are jointly assessed by the Non-Consultant Hospital Doctors (NCHD) and the Clinical Nurse Specialist (Mental Health) with support by the Consultant on Call. The service, based in the Emergency Department, South Tipperary General Hospital is a unique level of provision compared to other Emergency Departments throughout the country.

St Michael's Unit in Clonmel has recently been refurbished to address the needs of South Tipperary General Hospital in meeting their requirements for COVID-19.


The MHS in South Tipperary have plans drawn and planning permission granted for a new crises house for the service, which will be based on South Tipperary General Hospital campus. This has now gone for tender and confirmation of funding received. Work is due to commence in 2021.

The Mental Health Service SECH and St Luke's General Hospital, Kilkenny are currently collaborating in line with Government Protocols to facilitate the re-opening of the Mental Health Services Outpatients Department (OPD) in St Luke General Hospital, Kilkenny.

Patients within South East MHS continue to be seen in person, at home, in hospital or by telephone as appropriate.

Should you require any further information in relation to the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



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**David Heffernan**  
**Head of Mental Health Services**

