



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Bainisteoir Ginearálta,  
Seirbhísí do Dhaoine  
Scothaosta, Rannán Cúraim  
Shóisialaigh,  
CHO 1.  
Bhréifne Cúram Centre  
Béal Átha Conaill  
Co. An Cabhán

Fón +353 (0)49 952 5502

Office of the General Manager  
Services for Older  
Persons  
Social Care Division  
CHO 1  
Breffni Care Centre  
Ballyconnell  
Co. Cavan

Telephone +353 (0)49  
952 5502

Deputy Martin Kenny  
Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2.

10<sup>th</sup> June 2020

**PQ ref 8309/20**

To ask the Minister for Health the reason for the events which took place at the Rock Hospital, Ballyshannon, County Donegal in which all patients were relocated; the status of the hospital; his plans for the hospital; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Kenny

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.

In the interests of patient safety, all residential patients from the Rock Community Hospital, Ballyshannon were transferred to St Joseph's Community Hospital, Stranorlar during the onset of the Covid-19 crisis. The Rock Community Hospital building dates back to the 1800s and this action was taken in accordance with Public Health and Infection Control guidance.

All families/guardians were contacted and the rationale behind the transfer was explained to them. The HSE continues to review and assess the situation to ensure that any actions that are taken are in the overall interest of maintaining the health and safety of our patients.

The Rock is scheduled to merge with the Sheil Community Hospital in Ballyshannon when this facility is extended and upgraded. The capital project will commence in 2020 and is included in the HSE capital programme.

In CHO 1, the Covid-19 Outbreak Control Team actively manages all outbreaks within residential settings, i.e. Older Persons, Disability and Mental Health. Each facility continues to receive significant supports and advice that range from ensuring adequate medical care needs of residents; staffing levels; personal protective equipment; and how to safely implement the Infection Prevention and Control guidance. Across all residential and community services, Infection Prevention and Control procedures have been implemented in line with Public Health Medicine advice and best practice guidelines.

All residents and staff across the residential facilities have been tested for Covid-19. Their results are private and confidential. Residents who test positive or show symptoms of Covid-19 are nursed in strict isolation and are fully supported by nursing staff, medical services, where appropriate, alongside guidance from Infection Prevention Control and Public Health clinicians. Where staff test positive, they are required to self isolate for a 14 day period and do not return to work until they are clear from infection/symptoms.

CHO 1 Older Persons Services wish to reassure the community that they continue to provide both compassionate and high quality care to all residents and have implemented stringent measures to protect both residents and staff. Nursing management remain in contact with families/guardians of residents in relation to any suspected or confirmed cases of Covid-19. Where a relative/guardian has any query relating to the care of a resident, we ask them to contact us directly. We appreciate the difficulties faced by both residents and their families/friends as a result of visiting restrictions. We are continuing to communicate with all families/guardians throughout this difficult time and await further guidance to issue from the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHET) on the easing of visiting restrictions. The safety and health and wellbeing of residents and all staff continues to be our number one priority.

The HSE wishes to extend sincere condolences to the families of residents who have passed away and asks that the privacy of those who are sick and bereaved is respected. A Bereavement Support Service is available in CHO 1 to the families of those who have passed away.

I trust that this is of assistance, but please do not hesitate to contact me if you require further information.

Yours sincerely



---

Martin Collum  
General Manager  
Services for Older Persons  
CHO 1.