



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Social Care Department
Office of Older People Services
Lacken
Dublin Road
Kilkenny

Telephone 353 56 7784140

10th November 2020

Mr. Jackie Cahill T.D.
Dail Eireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ 33303/20

To ask the Minister for Health when St. Bridget's hospital, Carrick-on-Suir, County Tipperary will be returned to normal services; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Cahill,

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 reply is the current position.

In the current Covid-19 pandemic public health emergency, St. Brigid's was also designated as a Covid-19 step down facility to support flow from the acute hospitals in the region.

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. These arrangements have been kept under review - there remains a critical requirement for staff elsewhere in community healthcare services at this time. South East Community Healthcare appreciates the commitment of the excellent team of staff associated with St. Brigid's in taking up redeployment in Covid-19 related roles in community healthcare services.

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.

As services resume, prevailing public health guidance and social distancing requirements will have an impact on service capacity across the system and particularly in our residential and short stay inpatient units. There is an absolute requirement to ensure that strict infection prevention and control measures are implemented across services and that services are delivered in appropriate physical environments that enable adequate social distancing measures at all times, in line with Public Health recommendations.

I wish to advise you that SECH is therefore assessing and reviewing all services and the physical environments that those services are operating in, to determine what actions are required, if any, to enable the safe resumption of services, in line with current guidance.

With regret, SECH is not currently in a position to advise as to when services will resume at St. Bridget's as service resumption is dependent on the management of Covid related activity within the region along with the need to be assured that services at St. Brigid's can safely resume in a manner which is compliant with prevailing public health guidance and Infection, Prevention and Control guidance.

I wish to assure you that patients who require convalescent, respite and/or palliative care services continue to be supported in alternative settings at this time.

I trust this clarifies. 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". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Barbara Murphy
Head of Services for Older People
South East Community Healthcare