



25<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Deputy Paul Murphy  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

***PQ ref: 21255/20 - To ask the Minister for Health if he will report on the deaths to date due to Covid-19 in the HSE Crooksling and Tymon North nursing homes; the reason residents were moved from one facility to the other; if he will provide the communications with the families of residents; and if he will report on the relevant staffing issues***

***- Paul Murphy***

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Dear Deputy Murphy,

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

Tymon North Community Unit is a new 100 bed long term care facility, registered with HIQA in March 2020 and opened on 28th March, 2020. It was built to replace St. Brigid's, Crooksling long term care facility.

On 28th March 2020, 46 residents from St Brigid's were relocated to the new Tymon North facility. The transfer date was originally planned for the end of April 2020 but was brought forward due to the COVID-19 crisis, in the interest of both residents and staff safety. Tymon North Community Unit allows each resident to have their own room with ensuite facilities which greatly enhances the ability of staff to provide appropriate infection control measures. This would not have been possible in St Brigid's, Crooksling.

Prior to the move, a process was put in place to facilitate the cohorting of the residents based on their clinical care needs. Those who were symptomatic of COVID-19 were located in a specific area of the Unit to help reduce the likelihood of infection spread. The residents who were not symptomatic were cohorted in a separate area of this designated centre. The relocation was completed following consultation with and the support of a Community Consultant Geriatrician, the Department of Public Health, HIQA, HSE Estates, the National Ambulance Service and HSE staff.

The first diagnosed case of COVID-19 of a resident was recorded on the 23rd March 2020. The HSE can confirm that 12 residents, aged between 67 and 94 years, sadly died of confirmed or suspected COVID-19 between 29<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2020 at the Tymon North Community Unit, RIP. The HSE would like to express its sincere sympathies to the families and friends of all those who passed away.

During March and April 2020, a number of staff were absent due to COVID-19 illness and additional staff were redeployed to the Unit to support the care of the residents. Staffing levels in Tymon North Community Unit are and continue to be at the necessary level to ensure safe care is provided to residents. The residents of this new unit continue to be supported and cared for by a dedicated team of nursing and care staff. The Community Consultant Geriatrician continues to support the nursing and medical staff in this unit. Medical support has also been provided by the General Practitioner for the Tymon North Unit and there has also been recent additional support from Tallaght University Hospital who are assisting staff with delivery of education and enhanced infection control measures. The COVID 19 outbreak in Tymon North Community Unit has been declared over since a COVID-19 Outbreak Control Team meeting was held on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2020 with the HSE Department of Public Health. Robust infection prevention and control measures remain in place in the Unit as per HSE guidelines and Public Health recommendations, to prevent any future outbreaks of COVID-19.

This has been a very difficult time for families, for the community and for the staff caring for the residents in Tymon North Community Unit. The HSE acknowledges the trauma and concerns experienced in the Unit. A Crisis Support Team, comprising of a Principal Psychologist, Principal Social Worker and Senior Nursing Staff was established to assist families and staff in the Unit. The Team has linked with families of the deceased, families of current residents, and staff of the Unit to co-ordinate and address issues as they arise. A total of 25 family members were contacted. Additional feedback will be sought from bereaved families in the coming months. A memorial service and a post-bereavement support group will be offered to bereaved families when appropriate being mindful of social distance and in line with current guidelines.

Yours sincerely,



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Yvonne O'Neill,  
Interim National Director,  
Community Operations