



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

23 September 2020

Deputy David Cullinane
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2.

Rannan na nOspideil Ghearmhíochaine
Aonad 4A – Áras Dargan
An Ceantar Theas
An Bothar Mileata
Cill Mhaighneann
BÁC 8

Acute Operations
Health Service Executive
Unit 4A - The Dargan Building
Heuston South Quarter
Military Road
Kilmainham
Dublin 8.

Re PQ 21332 20: *To ask the Minister for Health the estimated cost of opening 500 acute beds in public hospitals by utilising existing space in acute hospitals; and if he will make a statement on the matter*

Dear Deputy Cullinane,

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. Your PQ above has been referred to me for response.

The average daily running cost of an in-patient hospital bed across acute hospitals can be calculated from the HSE annual pricing cycle as performed by the HSE Healthcare Pricing Office (HPO). This is €897 per day and represents the in-patient cost of a hospital bed including costs associated with:

- Clinical staffing
- Theatres
- Laboratories
- Non-clinical staffing
- Cleaning, maintenance and other running costs

The €897 is a 'fully-absorbed' cost which means it includes all treatment and care costs (such as diagnostics, theatres etc.) as well as running costs such as heating and lighting, servicing equipment etc. but excludes capital and depreciation. It does not include other associated hospital costs such as day case, outpatient and emergency department costs. The cost is calculated from costings submitted by hospitals under the Activity Based Funding programme and is based on 2018 data, the latest year for which information is available. This cost is a national average across all nights, all hospitals and all types of inpatient cases from the most routine to the most complex.

The table below show the estimated daily and annual running costs per acute in-patient hospital bed.

Table 1

Estimated average Running costs of acute in-patient hospital beds	€
Daily cost per bed	€897
Annual cost per bed	€327,629
<i>Source: Healthcare Pricing Office Note: Based on 2018 data</i>	

These estimate costs are given at a per bed rate and an overall total costing would be dependent on a breakdown of bed type requirements and actual availability of space within the Public Hospitals.

I refer to the latest update and the Government announcement, “Cabinet agreed last week to allocate a further €600 million for the 2020 Winter Initiative, to ensure that our health service has the capacity and resources needed to deal with what is forecast to be a particularly challenging few months. An enhanced flu vaccination programme, a building up of the public health workforce to ensure on-going effective outbreak management, testing and tracing; the development of alternative pathways of care to allow non-COVID healthcare to continue safely, alongside COVID care are all part of the Plan”

The HSE is currently finalising its plan for the delivery of services during the COVID-19 pandemic including the Winter period. The plan includes the following types of initiatives; increasing acute and community bed capacity, supporting moves from acute to community settings, GP access to diagnostics and alternative acute care pathways but there are other parts of the public service which we also need to protect and prioritise. Public services have resumed in the majority of areas, albeit with new safety protocols and a shift to on-line and digital where that is possible and appropriate. The Plan sets out a structured approach to ensuring all existing resumption and contingency plans are now fully aligned with the priorities and principles. There is a set of governance arrangements in place to ensure on-going synchronisation of the public service response to any changes in the level of restrictions. The priority is to protect the most vulnerable. The supports provided by local authorities such as the “Community Call” initiative will continue and will be ready to meet and manage changes in demand if restrictions have to be ramped up.

I trust that this is of assistance,

Yours sincerely,



Trina Doran
General Manager, Acute Operations