



Palliative Care Lead

Strategy and Planning

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Ceannasaí um Chúram Mhaolaitheach

Straitéis agus Pleanáil

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David Cullinane TD
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

18th September 2020

Re: PQ 21347/20 - To ask the Minister for Health the current and capital cost of a palliative care bed; and if he will make a statement on the matter

Dear Deputy Cullinane,

The Minister has requested the HSE to respond directly to you on this matter and the response is as follows:-

Palliative care services have grown organically in Ireland, with most initially developed by charitable/voluntary organisations. However, in the last decade a more strategic and collaborative approach has been taken in the development and funding of services. This approach is under-pinned by national policy, framework and guidance documents.

The HSE's palliative care development framework (2017) includes the opening of six new specialist palliative care inpatient units (IPUs/Hospices) over a five-year timeframe. Acknowledging that existing voluntary services remain heavily reliant on fundraising, a new funding model was agreed with the Department of Health – this has resulted in the allocation of 100% core funding to new IPUs.

The HSE, working in partnership with local voluntary organisations, plans to open three new IPUs this year. The pay and non-pay revenue costs have been agreed with the organisations and are based on existing local services and governance arrangements. **The average cost of providing an inpatient bed in these units is €265,000 per year.**

Sláintecare recognises that there are geographic variations in the provision of palliative care services and one of its recommendations is that palliative care becomes a universal service. This is in line with the 2017 HSE framework, which recommends that sustainability/core funding issues in existing services are addressed. A process to do this has commenced – in 2019 €2m in additional funding was allocated to voluntary service providers, with a further €3m allocated in 2020. Significant levels of Covid-19 funding support will also be made available this year. The process is on-going and further funding will be sought through the estimates process.

To date specialist palliative care units have been built by local hospice groups, with the HSE providing the budget for fit-out. Costs can vary significantly based on a range of factors including location, type of site, design, number of beds, and also the space required for Day Care and research and education etc. The IPUs also include a base for the local community palliative care team. In terms of the most recent builds Mayo cost in the region of €9m (14 beds) and Wicklow €9.8m (15 beds). The voluntary contribution for the 20 beds in the Southeast IPU, which was part of a redevelopment at University Hospital Waterford, was €6m.

I trust this answers your question but please do not hesitate to contact me should you require anything further.

Sheilagh Reaper-Reynolds
HSE Strategy and Planning Lead for Palliative Care