

4th May 2021

Mr Brendan Howlin TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ 20570/21

To ask the Minister for Health if it is planned to provide acute psychiatric beds at Wexford General Hospital; the arrangements for acute psychiatric treatment currently available for the persons in each area of County Wexford; if these arrangements are in acceptance with the A Vision for Change plan; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Howlin

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 this matter and the following is the position:

Following a Closure Order from the Mental Health Commission (the independent regulatory body for Mental Health Services in Ireland) in 2010, the Acute Mental Health Unit in St. Senan's Hospital, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford was amalgamated with the Waterford Mental Health Services and is now provided for in a 44 bed Acute Inpatient Mental Health Unit in University Hospital, Waterford. The Department of Psychiatry in University Hospital Waterford provides inpatient assessment, treatment and care to service users living in the Wexford area. Service users who live in North Wexford who attend Tara House Mental Health Services in Gorey and require acute inpatient admission have access to Newcastle Hospital, Greystones, Co. Wicklow. This allows for 49 acute inpatient beds in total which meets the requirements as set out in Vision for Change. Vision for Change recommends 50 acute inpatient beds for each mental health extended catchment area of 300,000 population. There are no acute psychiatric admission beds in Wexford General Hospital.

Community Mental Health Services

To support the amalgamation of acute mental health services a comprehensive €18m capital investment programme was implemented with the main developments taking place in Co. Wexford as follows:

- Tara House Community Mental Health Centre in Gorey - Day Hospital
- Tus Nua, Rehabilitation Unit in Enniscorthy (12 bedded unit)
- Havenview (14 bedded unit) and Millview (12 bedded unit) Intellectual Disability and Rehabilitation Units, Enniscorthy
- Farnogue Psychiatry of Later Life Unit and Team Headquarters, Wexford (20 designated Psychiatry of Old Age beds and 30 beds designated as part of the Community Nursing Unit for the Care of Older Persons.)
- Upgrade of Summerhill Community Mental Health Unit, Wexford

- An Tearmann (10 bed) Respite Unit located in Enniscorthy – referrals are through the community mental health teams.

In line with Vision for Change recommendations there are community based programmes available across the Wexford catchment area. These include the following:

- General Adult Community Mental Health Teams
- General Adult Community Day Hospitals
- Community Day Centres
- Rehabilitation and Recovery Teams
- Psychiatry of Later Life Teams
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
- There is an “out of hours” on call service in place for both adults and child and adolescent services.

Additional specialist services include:

- Mental Health Liaison Nurse Led Service (seven-day service) at the Emergency Department, Wexford General Hospital.
- Suicide Crisis Assessment Nurse (SCAN) Suicide Crisis Assessment Nurse (SCAN) - The SCAN service in Wexford provides a skilled mental health nursing service to Primary Care that provides an accessible and quick response to GP requests for a timely assessment of those in suicide/self harm distress.

A purpose built 10 bed Crisis Respite Unit (seven-day service); An Tearmann which is situated in Enniscorthy provides respite beds for service users who are referred through their mental health community teams for respite care.

Accessing MHS Out of Hours and Supports in Wexford

In Co. Wexford, individuals can access health services on a 24 hour basis, through CAREDOC, the GP Out of Hour services; via the Emergency Department at Wexford General Hospital 24 hours a day; or through the local mental health service (which takes referrals from the family doctor, CAREDOC or health professionals in the Emergency Department). Where someone attends the local mental health services and/or is referred by a GP to a Day Hospital in Wexford then, following assessment, any inpatient admission will be arranged through the Day Hospital directly to the Waterford/Wexford Department of Psychiatry (University Hospital Waterford).

There are four day hospitals in the Wexford Area as follows:

- Tara House, Gorey which is a seven day service from 9am-5pm
- Carn House, Enniscorthy which is a seven day service from 9am-5pm
- Summerhill, Wexford which is a seven day service from 9am-5pm
- Maryville, New Ross which is a five day service from 9am-5pm

There is a Nurse Specialist Liaison Service (7 day-service) provided at the Emergency Department, Wexford General Hospital. However in the event where someone presents directly to the Emergency Department of Wexford General Hospital during out-of-hours they will be referred to the Emergency Department at University Hospital Waterford. All unplanned admissions are triaged through the

Emergency Department (UHW). Alternatively depending on individual circumstances, it may be possible to wait until the following morning as three of the day hospitals are open on a 7-day basis.

Further support is available through the following community based services for people living in Wexford requiring support regarding their mental health.

- Suicide Crisis Assessment Nurse - (SCAN) Nurse is available in Wexford. They work with General Practitioners in the Community.
- The Self Harm Intervention Programme (SHIP). The SHIP service was first established in Wexford in 2004. This is a free confidential HSE professional counselling service offering short term counselling to individuals aged 16 and over who are experiencing suicidal ideation or the impulse to self-harm. Referral is through a person's GP or other medical professional.

Should you require any further information in relation to same, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



David Heffernan
Head of Mental Health Services
South East Community Healthcare