



Head of Service for Older Persons
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare
Health Service Executive
Model Business Park
Model Farm Road
Cork Eircode: T12 HT02

Cúram Sláinte Pobail Corcaigh Ciarraí
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Páirc Gnó Model
Bóthar na Modh Feirme
Corcaigh Eircode: T12 HT02
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20th December 2021

Deputy Brendan Griffin, T.D.,
Dáil Eireann
Dublin 2

PQ ref 62627/21:

"To ask the Minister for Health his plans in relation to resourcing West Kerry Community Hospital with additional staff to secure the retention of existing short and long-stay beds and to open the eight long-stay and eight short stay-beds that are needed to avoid older persons from the Dingle Peninsula being moved long distances from their homes to avail of residential care; and if he will make a statement on the matter".

Dear Deputy Griffin,

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.

West Kerry Community Hospital provides important services for the people of the area. As well as long-stay residential care (i.e. where West Kerry Community Hospital is their home), WKCH also provides what we call short-stay beds. These beds are used for respite and rehabilitation and the people using these beds generally stay for a number of days or weeks.

As of this December 20th, there are 34 long-stay residents and 3 people availing of short-stay beds for respite, rehab, palliative care or other supports. The current bed capacity at WKCH is 46. We plan to increase this capacity once we recruit more staff. As a result of staffing shortages, access to community support beds at West Kerry Community Hospital has had to be reduced on an intermittent basis.

Recruitment campaigns are underway to increase our staff resources with the most recent competition advertised in The Kerryman newspaper on October 13th with a closing date of October 28th 2021. In the meantime, we can only operate our services safely by adapting their provision to the resources we currently have. As additional staff are recruited, further beds will be made available.

We have made extensive and prolonged efforts, both locally and nationally over the past years and in particular over the past two years, to recruit staff. There have been enormous demands on the health service since the beginning of the pandemic in 2019 with nursing staff in particular being in demand to match all service requirements. We will, however, continue to explore all options to recruit additional staff to allow for the opening of extra placements in West Kerry Community Nursing Unit. Unfortunately, staff recruitment to West Kerry Community Nursing Unit and many other community hospitals in rural locations can be extremely challenging.

There are 4.5WTE vacant nursing posts along with a number of Healthcare Assistants required to open the remaining beds. Every effort is being made to reach as many prospective candidates as possible in order to ensure that West Kerry Community Hospital can provide optimum services to the local community.



I trust this clarifies the position. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Jackie Daly
Head of Service for Older Persons

