



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

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Deputy Holly Cairns,
Dail Eireann,
Dublin 2.

22nd December 2021

PQ Number: 62819/21

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health the steps he is taking to address the issues raised in relation to the care afforded to vulnerable prisoners, notably those with a mental illness, in the Council of Europe anti-torture Committee's 7th periodic visit report on Ireland; and if he will make a statement on the matter - Holly Cairns

Dear Deputy Cairns,

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. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

The HSE through the National Forensic Mental Health Service continues to provide in reach services in cooperation with the Irish Prison Service to vulnerable prisoners who require mental health care and treatment. The Central Mental Hospital in Dundrum currently accommodates 94 residents in secure in-patient psychiatric beds. The forensic consultant team in the Central Mental Hospital consider referrals from the prison service on a regular basis, with admissions based on the priority needs of the patient.

In addition to the in-patient service provided in the Central Mental Hospital, the National Forensic Mental Health Service also provide community based residential services. The NFMHS currently operates 6 community residences, which have a combined bed capacity for 30 patients.

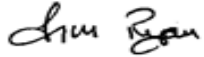
Work is progressing on the opening of a new, purpose built facility in Portrane, Co Dublin to replace the site in Dundrum. The Portrane facility is due to open in Q1, 2022, and on opening it will accommodate up to 110 patients. This will increase on a phased basis, firstly to 130, and then 160 when a 30-bed Intensive Care Rehabilitation Unit has opened.

The "Programme for Government – Our Shared Future" further committed to improvements in mental health with the establishment of a High Level Taskforce (HLTF) to consider the mental health and addiction challenges of vulnerable persons who interact with criminal justice system. The Taskforce was established partly in response to the recommendations of the Council of Europe Commission on the Prevention of Torture reports and all other relevant reports and recommendations.

With the ongoing provision of the in-reach service by the HSE, the increased capacity to admit patients to the new National Forensic Mental Health Hospital, once operational, and the establishment of the HLTF, substantial progress will be achieved in addressing the issues raised in the Council of Europe anti-torture committee's seventh periodic visit report on Ireland.

I trust this information is of assistance to you. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely,



Jim Ryan
Assistant National Director - Head of Operations
National Mental Health Service

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