



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

Oifig Cúraim Shóisialta
Cúram Sláinte Pobail Corcaigh Ciarraí
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Páirc Gnó Model
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17th February 2021

Deputy Paul Murphy T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ ref 5899/21

"To ask the Minister for Health if there was a breach of the Covid visiting policy at the HSEs Clonakilty Community Hospital on 30 December 2020, in which a group of eight persons allegedly visited a resident in the hospital, as indicated in a report in the media (details supplied) on 16 January 2021; if four of the group of eight visitors subsequently tested positive for Covid-19; and if the resident who was visited by the group was moved into isolation on foot of the visitors' Covid-19 test results; if that resident subsequently tested positive for Covid-19; his views on the implementation of Covid-19 visiting regulations for public and private hospitals and residential care facilities; and if he will make a statement on the matter"

Details supplied: Southern Star newspaper

Dear Deputy Murphy,

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.

The safety and wellbeing of all our residents and staff is everyone's utmost priority. While we do not comment on people's individual details or circumstances in order to protect their privacy, I can confirm that we have carried out a preliminary assessment into the circumstances you have raised with us and this has been reviewed by a Serious Incident Management Team.

Although significant precautions were taken and there was extensive advance preparation ahead of the visit, the assessment found that the visit wasn't fully in line with visiting guidelines. Although the actual visit took place in an outdoor space in accordance with the provisions of the outdoor visiting policy, the visitors accessed this space through a reception area which constituted a breach of the guidance. They did not enter the residential area.

Notwithstanding that the engagement with the resident took place in accordance with the guidelines in an outdoor space, the resident was subsequently cared for in isolation for two



weeks as a precaution. I can also confirm that no resident of Clonakilty Community Hospital has tested positive for Covid-19 in the last number of months months.

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare management has reiterated the importance of strict adherence to the guidelines and current restrictions on visiting with all our long-term residential care facilities, including the difference between outdoor and indoor visiting, and what are critical and compassionate circumstances.

It is important to remember that all our community hospitals have, where possible, facilitated visits on compassionate grounds. This is in line with the guidelines on visiting, which makes specific reference to critical and compassionate visits, once a risk assessment is carried out.

The guidelines also allow for outdoor visiting and window visiting where appropriate. This is in recognition of the importance of contact with families and loved ones for residents.

I trust this clarifies the position.

Yours sincerely,



Gabrielle O'Keeffe
Head of Service for Older People

