



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Head of Service - Older People
South East Community Healthcare
Lacken, Dublin Road
Kilkenny
R95NV08

8th February 2021

Mr. Martin Browne T.D.
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ 4652/21

To ask the Minister for Health if the cost of bringing St. Brigid's Hospital, Carrick-on-Suir up to the standard the HSE says it does not meet was identified before the decision to repurpose it was made; if so, if the relevant documents will be provided in relation to same; and if not, the reason a cost estimate was not compiled before it was deemed too costly to address.

Dear Deputy Browne,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Questions, which were submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

I have reviewed that matter and the following composite response is the position:

St Brigid's Hospital is a short stay unit with 16 beds including 3 palliative, 2 respite and 11 convalescent beds. The HSE operated activity at the hospital and the design and layout of the hospital is largely reflective of a small hospital from the time period that it was built (1837). The older and main part of the hospital is comprised of three floors, with resident bedrooms on the ground and first floor.

As part of health services resumption in a Covid environment, planning, prevailing public health guidance and social distancing requirements are having an impact on the manner in which we are delivering services, particularly in both short stay and residential services. There is an absolute requirement to ensure that strict infection, prevention and control measures are implemented across services and that services are delivered in appropriate physical environments that enable adequate isolation and social distancing measures at all times. As part of planning for services resumption, there is a need to assess all services and the physical environments that those services are operating in, to determine what actions are required, if any, to enable the safe resumption of services, in line with current guidance.

Substantial refurbishment is required in order to resume short stay services at St. Brigid's Hospital in line with safer, better, healthcare and infection, prevention and control standards. Unfortunately, the current premises are not conducive to support the level of refurbishment and adaptations required to resume short stay inpatient services at St. Brigid's Hospital. This would in effect require the demolition of the existing premises and a complete new build on a very tight site, with a need to raise floor levels by approx. 1 metre. HSE Estates/Technical services have indicated that this is not a viable option.

SECH have engaged with South Tipperary Hospice Home Care Team in discussions and meetings relevant to incorporating the provision of palliative care beds into these interim and future development plans. In the interim, it has been agreed that SECH will provide 2 additional palliative care beds in the existing St. Anthony's Unit in Clonmel - this arrangement is now operational.

In a Covid-19 environment, the HSE is striving to provide safe services to protect patients, services users and our staff delivering care.

I trust that this is of assistance. Should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact this office.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara Murphy". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Ms. Barbara Murphy
Head of Service for Older People
South East Community Healthcare