



CÚRAM SLÁINTE POBAIL  
**CORCAIGH CIARRAI**  
**CORK KERRY**  
COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE

Oifig na Seirbhísí Sláinte Meabhrach | Cúram Sláinte Pobail Corcaigh & Ciarraí

Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Páirc Gnó Model | Bóthar na Modh Feirme | Corcaigh  
T12 HT02

**Office of Mental Health Services | Cork Kerry Community Healthcare**

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10<sup>th</sup> December 2021

Deputy Pat Buckley,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Dublin 2

**PQ ref 59128/21**

**“To ask the Minister for Health if his attention has been drawn to the fact that some residents of the Owenacurra Mental Health Centre, Midleton, County Cork have been offered alternative placement outside of Midleton which are not appropriate to their needs; the reason this is happening when the residents want to remain in Midleton; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”**

Dear Deputy Buckley

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.

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare wish to emphasise that safety is central to the provision of a quality mental health service. The original plan for the Owenacurra Centre was to refurbish the building so as to bring it to a standard that allows for the provision of care and recovery which a modern service should provide and one that matches the care being provided there. However, as we moved to the advanced planning phase for the centre, serious concerns emerged that any level of refurbishment would not bring the building up to the standards required and neither would it be regarded as fit for purpose. The HSE recognizes the interdependencies of risks, e.g. the relative safety of the service user and staff is dependent on the safety of the environment in which care is delivered. Advice from building experts and our HSE estates function, informed the HSE in its difficult decision to close the centre, given the unacceptable deficiencies in the existing accommodation and the investment of significant funding into a building which would still not bring the unit up to an acceptable accommodation standard for residents.

The priority of Mental Health Services Cork Kerry Community Healthcare (CKCH) is to ensure that we identify the most suitable placement for every resident of the Owenacurra Centre based on their assessed needs, will and preferences. The process of finding the most appropriate alternative placements for the residents is currently underway and is likely to continue for several more months, so as to achieve our aim of finding the most appropriate placements possible and minimise disruption for each of our 18 residents. This process involves all key persons including the resident, him/herself, their families and the multi-disciplinary clinical team, in order to ensure that the transfer of each individual resident is to the most appropriate setting for each individual. Meetings with family members and residents continue and families will be advised as placement opportunities



arise.

At this stage, all of the residents have had their needs assessed. Without in any way identifying individuals or their preferences, it is clear that some people will require ongoing continuing care while others can be facilitated to live in lower support settings and with a plan for ongoing rehabilitative support and potentially a form of semi-independent living. As each placement is specific to the assessed needs, wills and preferences of each of the 18 residents, all feasible options with regards to alternative placements are being explored. In addition to the needs of the individual resident and their own personal will and preference with regards to alternative placement, management have consideration of a number of factors including suitability of the new environments, preference regarding sharing of accommodation, transport issues, etc.

We sincerely regret the fact that the centre needs to close, and in particular we acknowledge and regret the disruption for the residents of the Owenacurra Centre. The safety and wellbeing of residents is our utmost priority and concern. We understand that the Owenacurra Centre has been their home, and we will do everything to make sure that their move to a new home is as easy and as smooth as possible

I trust you find the above clarifies the query raised.

Yours sincerely,



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Kevin Morrison,  
A/Head of Mental Health Services  
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare