



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

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13<sup>th</sup> December 2021

Deputy Pat Buckley,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Dublin 2

PQ ref 59131/21

**“To ask the Minister for Health the plans the HSE have in place to retain the 24 bed long-stay respite services in Midleton, County Cork if the Owenacurra Centre is to close; when these beds and the service will be put in place; the date for the reinstatement of these services; 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. As outlined in correspondences to date, 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 by our Regulator. 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.

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. 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. This process is currently underway and engagement is underway and on-going with residents and their families.

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare is searching for a residential property in Midleton town to accommodate a small number of residents who would be able to avail of lower-level residential care. This is dependent on securing a suitable property, and such a move being in the best interests of the



residents. In addition we have provided assurances that we will explore options to relocate and reinstate the day service in the town as soon as possible. We will also be entering into discussions with the local authority and housing bodies regarding the use of the site for the purposes of providing appropriate community housing with support to people from the community with mental health needs in the future.

With regards to respite care, any patient over the age of 65 would have access to respite care (a number of weeks per year) in private nursing homes or community hospitals. As is with the general population, access to this would be organised through the PHN.

Since August 2021, there is now a full Psychiatry of Later Life service to all of North Lee catchment area including Cobh/Glenville Sector and Midleton/Youghal Sectors. This multidisciplinary team provide a home based service and also provide in-reach to Nursing homes and Community Hospitals. In the event an older person avails of respite in a nursing home, the POLL Team can visit them during their respite stay to ensure that there is no disruption to their care plan.

Individuals from Cork may be referred to all of the Community Residences i.e.;

### **Continuing Care**

- St Catherine Ward, St Finbarr's Hospital.
- St Stephens Hospital, Glanmire.

### **High Support Hostels**

- Cois Alla, Kanturk.
- Solus Nua, Mallow.
- Carraigabrick, Fermoy.
- St Coleman's House, Macroom.
- Garnish House, Western Road, Cork.
- Gougane Barra House, Western Rd, Cork.
- Glenmalure House, Blackrock Road.
- Saol Nua, Skibbereen.
- Perrot House, Skibbereen.

In the High Support Hostels, there is an option of utilising one of the places to facilitate brief respite on an assessed needs basis in order to provide an alternative to acute hospital admission and also to facilitate an earlier discharge from an acute approved centre. As individuals in congregated setting were identified as being of higher risk of contracting Covid-19 and separately individuals with severe and enduring mental illness have a higher risk of adverse outcome should they contract Covid-19, all such brief respite admissions stopped in order to protect these vulnerable residences during Covid-19.

A further Rehabilitation Consultant Psychiatrist has been approved for Cork Mental Health Services and this consultant is expected to commence duty in Jan 2022. This Rehabilitation team will support individuals with severe and enduring mental illness in the community. This Rehabilitation Team will have clinical governance of all community residences in North & South Lee and with a recovery focus work with each individual to assist them have as independent a life as possible with a focus on achieving a high level of quality of life

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare recognises community services as a valuable resource in dealing with many health problems, including mental health problems and we welcome the governments on-going investment in community based mental health services. The Department of Health 'Sharing the Vision' Policy document will act as a guide to the development of a community based approach to meet the mental health challenges of the community.



Cork Kerry Community Healthcare will continue to seek resources aligned to the proposed model of care as outlined in the 'Sharing the Vision' document and also aligning our existing resource to do so in as an effective manner as possible. In addition we will prepare a submission in line with the service requirements outlined in 'Sharing the Vision' to develop new purpose built facilities to meet the population needs. Such development proposals will range from new acute mental health facilities to replacing some continuing care bed stock and the emphasis will be on a recovery model for mental health patients and supporting them in their own homes and communities and minimize the need for residential continuing care facilities as much 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