

20th December 2022

Catherine Connolly TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

Ref: PQ ref 61381/22 – Clifden District Hospital – number of days closure

Dear Deputy Connolly

I refer to PQ ref 61381/22 uploaded on the PAD System on the 5th December 2022, due for response on the 20th December in relation to the number of days that Clifden District Hospital remained closed in view of the announced closure of the hospital planned for 24th to the 27th November. The following response outlines the current position.

The HSE nurse staffing level at St. Anne's Community Nursing Unit (CNU), Clifden continues to be inadequate and HSE Community Healthcare West are seeking to redress this situation with nurses from Clifden District Hospital (DH) supporting St. Anne's CNU along with some agency nurse support. There were no patients booked into Clifden DH from Thursday 24th to Sunday 27th November 2022 inclusive. Clifden DH was closed for this four day period during which staff in Clifden DH and St. Anne's CNU were given back some of the time they are owed and/or take annual leave.

Staff, in both St. Anne's CNU and Clifden DH are currently covering the roster by agreeing to work on their days off and annual leave days. While this is very much appreciated, the HSE acknowledges the burden on staff constantly and daily being asked to fill shifts, including those who had specifically applied for and were granted reduced hours. Staff representatives have also raised this point. The HSE has a 'Right to Disconnect Policy' which allows staff to disconnect and the HSE respects this. In working additional hours to cover the nurse shortfall, nurses have built up significant amounts of annual leave and time owing and these four day gave staff the opportunity to avail of some of this time. HSE Community Healthcare West will continue to review staffing levels to ensure safe sustainable services are provided.

I trust this response addresses the matter you have raised in this instance.

Yours sincerely



Siobhan O'Sullivan
General Manager
Older People's Services
Community Healthcare West