

8th March 2022

Deputy Neasa Hourigan, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2,

PQ ref 7788/22

“To ask the Minister for Health his views on long-stay wards in St. Finbarr’s Hospital and St. Stephen’s Hospital being the continuing care placement options for east County Cork service users requiring long-stay mental health placements into the future under current HSE plans; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”

Dear Deputy Hourigan,

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. I apologise for the delay in reverting to you with this response.

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare (CKCH) recognises that the majority of current approved mental health centres in Cork city and county are not bespoke buildings and are no longer fit for purpose. Many are buildings which underwent refurbishment and reconfiguration to re-purpose them into mental health Units. These buildings are not compliant with statutory premises, privacy and risk management regulations, or national policy and they are both the subject of ongoing regulatory enforcement actions.

In recognition of the above, the Chief Officer of CKCH in June 2021 commissioned the development of a strategic capital plan for Cork Adult Mental Health Services Approved Centres, to deliver modern services in bespoke, fit for purpose inpatient environments. The review has identified solutions to addressing our infrastructural requirements; delivering modern, fit-for-purpose, acute and rehabilitation/continuing care units across key Cork sites. These solutions align with national policy and the CKCH mission, vision and values, and will need to meet the regulatory requirements of the Mental Health Commission (MHC). They also meet the projected demographic changes over the next twenty years.

While the plan has yet to be formally signed off, it details—an overview of the medium-to-long-term plan for mental health Units in Cork including the following projects:

- Building a 50 bed, bespoke facility at St Stephen’s Campus for Cork, for older persons, rehabilitation and continuing care service users that require mental health supports;
- A new, purpose built 20 bed unit to replace St Catherine’s Unit in Cork City;
- Provision of a new St Michael’s Unit acute unit; a modern, purpose built 70-bed acute mental health acute admission unit incorporating current unit 4 acute care at St Stephens;
- A purpose built 36 bed Regional Psychiatric Intensive Care (PICU) and Rehabilitation Unit in Cork City to incorporate the current Carraig Mór and Unit 3 St Stephens provision;

In summary, the plan intends to replace 239 beds that do not meet regulatory compliance standards with 194 Mental Health Commission (MHC) approved centre beds in newly built units.

Once the draft Strategic Capital Plan has been formally accepted by the Chief Officer, CKCH will be submitting the plan for consideration as part of the HSE's Capital Plan. We will be advocating strongly that the funding required to bring the plan to fruition be provided so that CKCH can continue to provide high quality, therapeutic, supportive patient centred services, in fit for purpose approved centres, which are conducive to recovery.

I trust the above clarifies the queries raised.

Kind Regards,



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