



Cúram Sláinte
Phobail, Iarthar
ag freastal ar Ghailimh,
Maigheo agus Ros Comáin

Community
Healthcare West
serving Galway, Mayo
and Roscommon

Ceannasaí Seirbhíse – Seirbhísí do Dhaoine Scothaosta

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9th March 2022

Éamon Ó Cuív
Dáil Éireann
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

Ref: PQ ref 13521/22 - Clifden District Hospital

Dear Deputy Ó Cuív,

I refer to PQ ref 13521/22 received on 4th March 2022 and due for response by 24th March 2022 in relation to services that were provided from Clifden District Hospital between 2010 and 2019; the services being provided now; any plans to increase the services at the hospital to avoid persons having to go to Galway city for services. The HSE have been requested to respond to you directly on this matter. Below outlines the response.

Community Healthcare West is committed to delivering high quality care and is cognisant of the importance of the services for older persons provided in Clifden for the large geographical catchment area.

As part of the long term plan the development of a new 40 bedded unit is underway as a replacement for St. Anne's CNU and Clifden District Hospital. The upgrade of St Anne's was committed to HIQA in terms of the enhancing of the privacy and dignity of residents of this long term care facility by the replacement of multi-occupancy rooms with shared sanitary accommodation to almost exclusively single en-suite rooms. The new build will also seek to provide for emerging needs by the inclusion of a 10 bedded dementia unit and rooms that can accommodate bariatric residents. The new build is on 2 levels with the dementia unit and 10 short stay beds (acute step down and respite) planned for the ground floor and 20 long stay beds on the upper floor. This project is currently at design stage, with planning permission expected to be applied for in Q4 2022.

When the new build is commissioned all the services and staff will be amalgamated into one. In preparation for the operation of this unified service on a single site in one building, management are implementing a change management programme and have advanced discussions to amalgamate the services, staffing, governance, policies, practices and procedures

Despite running a number of recruitment campaigns, including a recent bespoke campaign for Connemara with local advertisement, nurse staffing levels in St Anne's Designated Centre have continued to prove challenging over the last 7 years. The HSE has a regulatory, legal and ethical obligation to the residents in its care in St Anne's. On the other hand, demand for Clifden District Hospital, which provides step down services from acute hospitals has been consistently falling with average demand for this service dropping by approximately two-thirds in the same period. Covid has exacerbated the situation as the bulk of the bed capacity in Clifden District Hospital is provided in the 14 bedded male and female wards against a background of the requirement and patient expectation for higher infection prevention and control standards. The HSE must ensure that available nurses are prioritised to St Anne's Designated Centres to meet their obligations. The number of total nurses available on a consistent basis is the key determinant of the maximum number of beds in older person that can be open, underpinned by demand.

There are no plans to reduce any services in Clifden DH pending the completion of the new build. Respite services can be facilitated in Clifden DH. Accommodation was provided to GUH in Clifden District Hospital to facilitate it providing its radiology service there and to Westdoc as a base for the part time weekend service it provided as a support to local GPs. It is also planned that the existing St Anne's building would be re-purposed and will include the relocated day care facility as well as providing the potential option for space that may be required for other services.

Day Services have recommenced in Clifden District Hospital and we have recently secured funding for a bus to arrange transport for clients in the day service.

The amalgamation will also provide common rosters across both sites with the same shift starting and finishing times for nursing and care staff. Duplicate services such as the requirement for 2 kitchens serving an average maximum of 21 residents and 9 patients will also be amalgamated. The Public Service Agreement or "Croke Park Agreement" agreed between government and the public sector unions provides an enabler to work through these changes and the HSE have been engaging with staff and their union representatives around these changes since 2020.

We will continue to work with all relevant stakeholders to progress these plans as part of the joint commitment to utilise this fantastic opportunity of the new build to provide sustainable residential older people services for the population of Clifden and surrounding areas.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Shannon Glynn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Shannon Glynn
Head of Service
Older People's Services
Community Healthcare West