

31st March 2022

Deputy Pat Buckley
Dáil Éireann
Dublin 2

PQ ref 14316/22

“To ask the Minister for Health if his attention has been drawn to that the two short-term respite beds in the Owenacurra Health Centre, Midleton, County Cork are now closed; the rationale for same; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”

PQ ref 14317/22

“To ask the Minister for Health if his attention has been drawn to the fact that the two short-term respite beds are closed in the Owenacurra Centre, Midleton, County Cork and all the associated services with those beds have ceased; when these services will be reinstated; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”

PQ ref 14327/22

“To ask the Minister for Health the location the two short stay respite beds based in the Owenacurra Health Centre, Midleton, County Cork will be relocated to in Midleton if the centre is to be closed by the HSE; 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 Questions, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

It is important to note 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 Public Health Nurse.

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.

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 the above clarifies the queries raised.

Kind Regards,



Mr Hugh Scully
A/General Manager
Mental Health Services
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare