

31st March 2022

Deputy Pat Buckley
Dáil Éireann
Dublin 2

PQ ref 14326/22

“To ask the Minister of Health the location the 22 long stay respite beds based in Midleton, County Cork at the Owenacurra Health Centre will be moved 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 Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

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. The process of finding the most appropriate alternative placements for the residents is currently underway and is likely to continue for several more months, so as to achieve our aim of finding the most appropriate placements possible and minimise disruption for each of our 18 residents. This process involves all key persons including the resident, him/herself, their families and the multi-disciplinary clinical team, in order to ensure that the transfer of each individual resident is to the most appropriate setting for each individual. Meetings with family members and residents continue and families will be advised as placement opportunities arise.

At this stage, all of the residents have had their needs assessed. Without in any way identifying individuals or their preferences, it is clear that some people will require ongoing continuing care while others can be facilitated to live in lower support settings and with a plan for ongoing rehabilitative support and potentially a form of semi-independent living. As each placement is specific to the assessed needs, wills and preferences of each of the 18 residents, all feasible options with regards to alternative placements are being explored. In addition to the needs of the individual resident and their own personal will and preference with regards to alternative placement, management have consideration of a number of factors including suitability of the new environments, preference regarding sharing of accommodation, transport issues, etc.

A commitment to source a community house in Midleton town was made to facilitate any resident of Owenacurra that may be suitable for this facility or any service user in East Cork. The model for this service would be rehabilitation focused with healthcare professional staff supporting the residents

It's also important to note Cork Mental Health Services have a seven-day service in the community. This means that individuals can be seen every day if that is the level of support required. The introduction of that service has proven to be invaluable to individuals and their families when they have periods in which they require increased support. These teams have multidisciplinary support, so, again, they serve to enable individuals to address matters that are causing them either difficulty or distress. The input of social work, occupational therapy and psychology is invaluable, and the community supports are very strong. This year, we have a psychiatry of later life community service that now covers all of Cork. Up until that, we would not have had a service for all of east Cork but now we do. It can provide support to individuals in their homes, residential settings for older persons and in nursing homes.

We wish to reiterate 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

I trust the above clarifies the queries raised.

Kind Regards,



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