

31st March 2022

Deputy Pat Buckley
Dáil Éireann
Dublin 2

PQ ref 14328/22

“To ask the Minister for Health if the HSE is willing to leave all the residents, staff and all services in situ at the Owenacurra Health Centre, Middleton, County Cork indefinitely; 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.

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare wish to emphasise that safety is central to the provision of a quality mental health service. The original plan for the Owenacurra Centre was to refurbish the building so as to bring it to a standard that allows for the provision of care and recovery which a modern service should provide and one that matches the care being provided there. However, as we moved to the advanced planning phase for the centre, serious concerns emerged that any level of refurbishment would not bring the building up to the standards required and neither would it be regarded as fit for purpose by our Regulator.

The HSE recognizes the interdependencies of risks, e.g. the relative safety of the service user and staff is dependent on the safety of the environment in which care is delivered. Advice from building experts and our HSE estates function, informed the HSE in its difficult decision to close the centre, given the unacceptable deficiencies in the existing accommodation and the investment of significant funding into a building which would still not bring the unit up to an acceptable accommodation standard for residents. This remains the current position.

The priority for the service remains the welfare of the remaining residents of the centre. We continue to work with each resident individually and consult with their families to agree an appropriate alternative placement based on their assessed needs and their will and preference. Residents continue to move on a phased basis and the work with each resident is on-going.

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 ensure 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

