



Head of Service for Older People
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare
Health Service Executive
Model Business Park
Model Farm Road
Cork Eircode: T12 HT02

Cúram Sláinte Pobail Corcaigh Ciarraí
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Páirc Gnó Model
Bóthar na Modh Feirme
Corcaigh Eircode: T12 HT02
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12th April 2022

Deputy Brendan Griffin, T.D.,
Dail Eireann
Dublin 2

PQ ref 16963/22:

"To ask the Minister for Health if a plan is in place or is being considered to open more beds at West Kerry Community Hospital, if details of such a plan will be provided; if a commitment to increasing bed numbers at the hospital will be provided; and if he will make a statement on the matter".

Dear Deputy Griffin,

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.

West Kerry Community Hospital (WKCH) provides important and valued services to people living in the West Kerry area. As the hospital is one of just two units providing long-term care on the Dingle Peninsula, WKCH plays a significant role in the community.

The current bed capacity at WKCH is 46 and Cork Kerry Community Healthcare plans to increase capacity at this facility once additional staff have been recruited. It is unfortunately not currently possible to open additional beds in WKCH until more staff have been recruited. With the current staffing levels in West Kerry Community Hospital, the maximum number of people that can be safely accommodated right now are being accommodated.

To this end, extensive and prolonged efforts are ongoing, both locally and nationally, to recruit staff. There have been enormous demands on the health service since the beginning of the pandemic with nursing staff in particular being in demand to match all service requirements. Unfortunately, staff recruitment to West Kerry Community Nursing Unit and many other community hospitals in rural locations can be extremely challenging.

A number of Nursing and Healthcare Assistant posts need to be filled at WKCH to open the remaining beds. Every effort is being made to reach as many prospective candidates as possible in order to ensure that West Kerry Community Hospital can provide optimum services to the local community. A Staff Nurse campaign for Older Persons Services was initiated by Cork Kerry Community Healthcare in January 2022 and interviews are currently taking place. We hope to place interested candidates in WKCH once a panel has been formed.



In addition to this campaign, an advert was recently placed locally with West Kerry Live to specifically reach out to prospective nursing candidates in the Dingle area. Two nurses applied and both candidates were successful at local interview. One candidate has accepted a post and is currently undergoing the required recruitment checks and an agreed start date should be confirmed very soon. The other candidate is hoping to commence later this year.

Two Health Care Assistant posts have recently been filled at WKCH and remaining vacancies have been expressed out to the existing Cork Kerry Community Healthcare HCA panel.

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare is committed to increasing the staff complement at WKCH in order to increase bed capacity and optimise service provision for the local community.

I trust this clarifies the position. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Jackie Daly
Head of Service for Older People

