



Oifig an Bainisteoir Ginearálta,  
Seirbhísí do Dhaoine Scothaosta,  
CHO 1.  
Bhréifne Cúram Centre  
Béal Átha Conaill  
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19<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Deputy Thomas Pringle  
Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2

**PQ ref 24355/22 - To ask the Minister for Health when day services in community hospitals across County Donegal will commence for the elderly who have had no services since early 2020; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Pringle

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.

I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

Following the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic in March 2020, all day hospitals in Co Donegal were forced to close in accordance with the Infection Prevention Control (IPC) Guidelines and concerns about service users' and staff welfare. The IPC guidelines began to be relaxed in the late summer/early autumn of 2021 and some of the day hospitals commenced reopening at that stage. However, due to a number of reasons as outlined below, IPC advice and sporadic staff shortages as a result of Covid 19 outbreaks, a number of the community hospitals have been unable to reopen or have reopened and been forced to close again. The following is an overview of the current status of Day Hospital Services in each of the community hospitals in Co Donegal.

**Day Hospital Dungloe** - Day Hospital Services have resumed at Dungloe Community Hospital and are currently operating five days per week.

**Day Hospital Falcarragh** - Day Hospital Services have resumed at Falcarragh Community Hospital and are currently operating three days per week. This will be increased to 5 days per week when staffing allows and it is safe to do so. This is being reviewed on an ongoing basis.

**Day Hospital Ballyshannon** - The Day Hospital in Ballyshannon remains closed due to the closure of the Shiel Hospital and the ongoing building of the new community hospital in Ballyshannon. The HSE is currently trying to source alternative accommodation for the day hospital in the locality and it is envisaged that an alternative day hospital could be opened by the fourth quarter of this year. There is also a HSE-funded day centre which opens three days per week. Throughout Covid, the hospital continued to supply meals to older people in the local community.



**Day Hospital Buncrana** - Due to the ongoing refurbishments at Buncrana Community Hospital, day hospital services had to be moved out of the unit and have now resumed at the Slieve Sneacht Centre, Dumfries, Buncrana. They are currently operating three days per week. This will be increased to 5 days per week when staffing allows and it is safe to do so. This is being reviewed on an ongoing basis.

There is also a HSE-funded Meals on Wheels Service in the local community

**Day Hospital Carndonagh** - The Day Hospital at Carndonagh Community Hospital remains closed as it is no longer suitable for the provision of a day hospital service. The position at the moment is that no suitable available properties were identified on the rental market when Property Management carried out a trawl of the market late last year. This matter was discussed at the most recent HSE CHO1 Estates meeting and Property Management have again undertaken to carry out a search of the area for suitable rental accommodation. As an alternative to this, a small number of former day hospital clients have been accommodated by arranging transport to attend the Clonmany Day Centre on two days per week and others have attended the Slieve Sneacht Centre, Dumfries on two days per week. It is envisaged that an alternative location should be up and running by the first quarter of 2023.

**Day Hospital Killybegs** - Day hospital services had resumed at Killybegs Community Hospital but due to staff shortages the facility had to be temporarily closed again. It is hoped that following recent recruitment competitions, the Day Hospital will be in a position to resume services during the third quarter of 2023.

**Day Hospital Donegal Town** - The Day Hospital in Donegal Town remains closed due to structural problems with the roof at the Day Hospital. The unit is a listed building and this has complicated matters in relation to its repairs; however, there is ongoing engagement with HSE Estates regarding this issue. It is envisaged that Day Hospital services should be up and running by the first quarter of 2023.

The hospital continues to provide a Meals on Wheels service to older persons in the community.

**Day Hospital Lifford** - Lifford Day Hospital has remained closed due to the recent closure of the community hospital. Management at Lifford Community Hospital and Property Management are now at an advanced stage in negotiations with a local group regarding the rental of a building in the locality. It is due to be visited shortly by HSE Estates to finalise any remaining requirements. It is envisaged the Day Hospital will be in a position to resume services during the third quarter of 2023.

Throughout this time, the hospital has continued to provide older persons in the community with a meals service.

**Day Hospital Ramelton** - The Day Hospital at Ramelton Community Hospital remains closed as it is no longer suitable for the provision of a day hospital service. Hospital management and Property Management have recently begun negotiations with a local group regarding the rental of a building in the locality. These premises are due to be



visited soon by Property Management to assess the suitability as a potential day hospital in the community. It is envisaged that this Day Hospital service will be up and running for the fourth quarter of 2023.

**Day Hospital St Josephs** - The Day Hospital at St Joseph's Hospital had to close when the National Ambulance Service required a base at the hospital prior to Covid. Recently, management at the hospital, in partnership with Property Management, have sought to look for alternative accommodation for the day hospital in the locality. It is envisaged that Day Hospital services should be up and running again by the first quarter of 2023.

All through the Covid lockdowns and restrictions, the hospital continued to provide meals to its former service users in the community.

I trust this information is of assistance to you but should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Martin Collum'.

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Martin Collum  
Bainisteoir Ginearálta,  
Seirbhísí do Dhaoine Scothaosta,  
CHO 1

General Manager,  
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