

24th October 2022

Deputy Neasa Hourigan
Dáil Éireann
Dublin 2

PQ ref 50999/22

“To ask the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question No. 593 of 14 September 2022, the dates on which family members of residents of Garnish House, Cork were informed of the decision by the HSE to vacate the property in Q1 of 2023; the format and context that this information was conveyed to them; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”

Dear Deputy Hourigan,

The Health Service Executive have been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted for the Minister for Health for a response.

At the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, the risk was identified that residents in Millfield House, a high support hostel were sharing small multi-occupancy rooms and every effort was made to source more suitable, safer accommodation from an Infection, Prevention and Control perspective. Garnish house was sourced which allowed single room occupancy for all Millfield House residents and also single rooms for a number of residents from other community residences. The initial transfer of service had to be undertaken urgently and at short notice, given the challenge of the pandemic, as it was unfolding at the time and the need to provide service continuity as much as possible in the context of a Covid environment. The service moved in full to Garnish House and some residents of other mental health facilities also moved there on a temporary basis. The service move has always been identified as not being permanent.

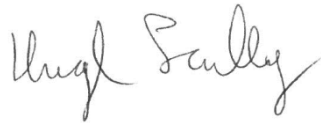
While we were grateful to rent Garnish House in the context of the threat posed by Covid-19, purchasing it outright has never been a realistic option for many reasons, including its location and the renovations which would be needed in the long-term. There is and has been on-going discussion with clinicians, senior managers and residents of this high support service, to ensure that they are aware that the service would be moving at some stage, though we would not have a finalised decision on its location.

As you are aware, the HSE has committed to transferring the service from Garnish House by the end of Quarter 1 2023. Detailed planning to enable the service transfer from Garnish is not yet complete. Formal communication to family/next of kin of residents residing in Garnish House will take place once planning has been finalised.

Again it is important to say this is not a continuing care resident transfer plan or a closure of a centre, but actually the relocation of a service and where the needs of the service users will be supported by the clinical team involved during the re location

I trust the above clarifies the queries raised.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hugh Scully". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'H'.

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