

20th September

Deputy Pat Buckley,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ ref 42844/22

“To ask the Minister for Health the number of new long-stay and short-stay mental health respite beds that have been approved and allocated in each of the electoral areas in east Cork in each of the years 2016 to 2021 and to date in 2022, in tabular form; 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.

Mental Health Services in Cork Kerry Community Healthcare aim to promote and protect the mental health of the population and to provide effective services to those who need them. Mental Health Services work collaboratively with other Health and Social Care Services. Our services have a strong focus on recovery and co-production and have consistently sought to develop and enhance community based services and reduce, where appropriate, those treated in more acute services.

Services are provided through community mental health teams and these teams are supported by day hospitals, day centres and community residences / high support hostels and inpatient units.

Within Mental Health Community Residences, there is an option of utilising one of the places to facilitate brief respite on an assessed needs basis in order to provide an alternative to acute hospital admission and also to facilitate an earlier discharge from an acute approved centre. As individuals in congregated settings were identified as being of higher risk of contracting Covid-19 and separately individuals with severe and enduring mental illness have a higher risk of adverse outcome should they contract Covid-19, all such brief respite admissions stopped in order to protect these vulnerable residences during Covid-19. By way of update, I have been advised that if there is a requirement for this service, the rehabilitation team can assess the individual’s needs and formulate a care plan, and if clinically appropriate, a short stay can be arranged in the community if all infection prevention control measures have been adhered to within that particular residence. This would also be dependent on bed availability within Cork Mental Health Services.

I trust the above clarified 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'.

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