

27th September 2022

Deputy Neasa Hourigan
Dáil Éireann
Dublin 2

PQ ref 44925/22

“To ask the Minister for Health the plans in relation to use of Garnish House, Cork as a mental health facility; if the house will be rented beyond 2022; if not, if the house will be considered for purchase; the details of the consultation (details supplied) that the HSE has had with family members of residents since April 2020 regarding the duration of the HSE's use of the property as a placement centre; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”

Detail supplied: number of meetings or letters on this subject - not identifying information)

Dear Deputy Hourigan,

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.

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. Residents of Millfield House were informed of this and details of the transfer during a meeting with staff on the 26th April 2020. Nursing staff then informed each individual's next kin of the plan to move to Garnish House via telephone calls. Throughout this move clients and family members were empathetically supported and a person centred approach was taken. It is also noted additional psychology support was given to residents to assist them with the transfer.

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. We constantly consider any opportunities to purchase or lease accommodation which would enable us to improve living conditions for residences, but Garnish House has never been actively considered for purchase.

We expect to vacate Garnish House in the first quarter of next year i.e. in the first three months of 2023.

The provision of community residence accommodation and its infection prevention and control measures remain a priority for the service, and in that context the community residences within CKCH continue to be evaluated.

I trust the above clarified the queries raised.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hugh Scully". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Hugh" and the last name "Scully" clearly distinguishable.

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