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13<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Deputy Thomas Gould, T.D.,  
Dáil Éireann  
Dublin 2

**PQ ref 9987/23:**

**"To ask the Minister for Health the number of beds in dementia-specific nursing home units in Cork".**

**PQ ref 9988/23**

**"To ask the Minister for Health the number of applications for dementia specific nursing-home care in Cork in 2022".**

Dear Deputy Gould,

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

While national policy on care for older people is focused on supporting people to remain at home for as long as possible, the national dementia strategy recognised that, for some people, long-term residential care may be required when home care is no longer feasible or appropriate. There are a number of dementia specific residential care units across the country and most nursing homes will accommodate people living with dementia; however they may not have a secured dementia unit or dedicated dementia beds. While some people will enter long-term care with a formal diagnosis of dementia, others will develop dementia while they are resident in the nursing home.

A majority of people with dementia reside in generic residential care facilities and this is reflected in the 2016 revised HIQA National Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People in Ireland. The standards place a strong focus on quality of life and a person-centred approach to care for all residents, including those with dementia.

With regard to **PQ reference 9987/23**, nursing homes are generally classified into centres which have a Dedicated Dementia unit (which will have a defined number of beds) and those centres that will accept low to medium risk cases (and consequently do not have a defined number of beds as such and risk-assess each case before acceptance).

Within Cork city and county, the number of dementia-specific residential care beds currently provided by private nursing homes with a dedicated dementia unit is 102. A further 10 private nursing homes may accept low to medium risk cases, depending on risk assessment to establish if a patient can be safely accommodated.

The HSE currently provides 67 dementia beds in Cork city and county. All other long-term residential beds are profiled as generic beds in order to meet the community's needs but may accept low to medium risk cases following risk assessment.



Further dementia-specific beds are scheduled to come on stream in the Cork region with 19 beds designated for dementia care at Heather House later this year when work has been completed on the new Dementia Unit. In addition:

- 4 additional dementia-specific beds, in addition to the current allocation of 14 beds, will be delivered at Clonakilty Community Hospital when refurbishment and extension works have been completed at that unit.
- In December 2022, the Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly T.D. and Minister for Mental Health and Older Persons, Mary Butler T.D., announced the awarding of the contract to deliver seven Community Nursing Units (CNU) under the HIQA compliance programme through Public Private Partnership (CNU PPP Project). 105 beds will be delivered at St Finbarr's Hospital, Cork which will incorporate dementia-specific beds comprised of three ten bed households. The household model creates a person-centred approach focusing on quality of life, providing an environment that reflects the comforts of home, with assistance provided as necessary around the performance of everyday tasks.

In relation to **PQ reference 9988/23** in respect of applications for specific nursing home care in 2022, it should be acknowledged that dementia is an umbrella term to describe a range of conditions and this is complicated by the fact that dementia is a progressive illness. Based on both its progression and the individual characteristics displayed by an applicant for care, the type of facilities required can vary from a dedicated Dementia Unit to a general nursing bed but with additional safeguards such as controlled entry / egress.

Total applications for nursing home care in Cork in 2022 for state support amounted to **1,235** applications. Whereas it is estimated that some 30% of applicants may have a diagnosis to some degree of behavioural/cognitive problems, not all of these will require a dedicated Dementia unit and therefore it is not possible to quantify the amount of dementia-specific applications for nursing home care. In each case an individual assessment is carried out by the selected provider to assess if that particular applicant can be safely accommodated in the facility and if a dedicated dementia unit or less restrictive facilities are deemed suitable for that particular applicant.

I trust this clarifies the position. Provision of enhanced services for people with dementia is a HSE priority and Cork Kerry Community Healthcare is committed to improving dementia-specific care and support services in the region.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



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Jackie Daly  
Head of Service for Older People

