



Oifig an Stiúrthóra Náisiúnta  
Géaroibríochtaí

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Deputy Holly Cairns  
Department of Health  
Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2

**3<sup>rd</sup> July 2023**

**PQ 32528/23; To ask the Minister for Health the steps he is taking to avoid individuals who do not wish to be in mixed gender wards being placed in these settings. -Holly Cairns**

Dear Deputy Cairns,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above PQ. I am responding on behalf of the National Director, HSE Acute Operations.

The HSE promotes a culture where patient safety is an organisational wide priority, and it is disappointing therefore to read in the correspondence that the members of the public concerned had a poor patient experience. It is the vision of the HSE Patient Safety Strategy (2019-2024) that all patients will consistently receive the safest care possible. Creating and maintaining a positive safety culture and designing safe systems of care is central to the mission of our health and social care services.

Access to hospital beds is a multifaceted issue and accommodation challenges, where they exist, must be balanced to ensure timely access for patients to appropriate services. Nevertheless, the HSE acknowledges that operational practices of mixed accommodation in certain circumstances can affect the dignity and privacy of patients.

The findings of the National Inpatient Experience Survey 2022 reported generally positive results in terms of privacy from patients on various parts of their patient journey. The stages of care surveyed included *Admissions, Care on the ward* and *Discharge or transfer*.

The HSE Acute Operations and HSE National Office of Human Rights and Equality is currently progressing work in relation to providing guidance on gender accommodation in acute hospitals for operational practice.

I trust this is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,



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**Margaret Brennan**  
**Quality and Patient Safety Lead**  
**Assistant National Director, HSE Acute Operations**