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31<sup>st</sup> July 2023,

Deputy Fergus O'Dowd,  
Dáil Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2

Dear Deputy O' Dowd,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the following Parliamentary Question, which was submitted to this Department for response.

**PQ Number: 33315/23**

**To ask the Minister for Health to provide an update on the Programme for Government commitment on the development and targeted expansion and availability of step-down facilities across each of the CHO areas, since the establishment of the current Government; and if he will make a statement on the matter**

In January 2016, Government announced a comprehensive Programme of investment in public residential care, Community Nursing Units/Community Hospitals, with the intention of ensuring that all public residential care units would comply with HIQA Regulation and Standards with a target date of 2021. The emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted the timeline for implementation, given the interruption to the construction sector and has also accelerated closure of some of our community beds in order to comply with social distancing and infection control requirements. However, it has also provided an opportunity to incorporate learning from the Covid-19 pandemic including the recommendations of the Expert Report into the overall Reform Programme. At the end of June 2023, 44 projects have been completed and construction is underway on several more facilities while other projects are at various stages of appraisal, planning and design. It is anticipated a further 11 projects will be completed by the end of 2023, with an additional 8 projects in 2024 while the remainder will be completed in 2025 or thereafter.

In tandem with the Community Nursing Programme above, work is continuing in collaboration with senior executive and clinical leadership across the wider health delivery system with strategic intent to ensure the provision of appropriate community residential services in line with population needs to further support our older population. This work will be progressed via the HSE National Service Planning process.

Kind Regards,

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**Ms Janette Dwyer**  
Assistant National Director,  
Services for Older People, Change & Innovation