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Deputy Neasa Hourigan,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Dublin 2

### PQ ref 33537/23

**“To ask the Minister for Health if he will outline how the Mental Health Commission can reconcile concerns it raised in its annual report from June 2022 regarding 2,000 people living in congregated settings with their approval in court in November 2022 of HSE proposals to build a 50-bed continuing care and rehabilitation service on the isolated grounds of St. Stephen's Hospital, Glanmire; under which mental health policy the Mental Health Commission made this approval; in what way this can be said to offset any of the disadvantages incurred by a resident who was moved to unit 3, St. Stephen's Hospital from another approved centre in breach of a condition on the registration of unit 3; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”**

Dear Deputy Hourigan,

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

I wish to advise that the HSE cannot address matters pertaining to the position and internal decision making processes of the Mental Health Commission regarding the questions raised.

People with mental health care needs require different levels of support, often at different stages of their lives and for varying periods of time. These care needs are assessed by clinical staff. People may also vary in terms of their ability to live independently and require different levels of care across the continuum of care, necessitating the need for a range of residential services – i.e both community based and continuing care. Whilst there is an increased move towards Community Rehabilitation and Recovery Services within Mental Health Services there are also service users who will require the on-going support and structure of a community residence geared towards continuing care.

Staff work with and support services users in terms of exercising their will and preference for the services best suited to meet their care needs within available residential and community options. In line with the HSE Model of Care for People with Severe and Enduring Mental Illness and Complex Needs, Community Rehabilitation Teams will provide a range of interventions based on the changing needs of the individual service user both in the community and in residential settings as appropriate. It is expected that service users will progress across levels of care. Where appropriate, Mental Health Teams will support service users in obtaining appropriate independent community accommodation and will link with local authorities and voluntary housing associations to advocate for access to appropriate housing for service users. They will develop the capacity to provide support for service users who transition to independent community accommodation and develop links with other tenancy support and visiting services.

The current provision of community residential and continuing care services in Cork and Kerry Mental Health Services is as follows:

#### **Community Residences**

At present there are ten community residences in Cork and four in Kerry. An additional property has been purchased in Middleton for resident of Owenacurra which will support a community living model. CKCH MHS and HSE Estates continue to explore options for a second property in the area.



## Continuing Care

There are 7 MHS continuing care units in Cork and Kerry which are regulated by the Mental Health Commission:

- Four continuing care units within St Stephens Glanmire
- One in Owenacurra, Midleton which is closing and replacement with a ten bedded new build will commence in 2024
- One St Catherines on the Douglas Road
- One Continuing Care unit in Killarney, Kerry – Deerlodge which opened in 2017

Owenacurra is due to close and will be replaced with a ten bedded unit due for construction in 2024

## Capital Plan

In early 2022 CKCH MHS convened a working group to deliver a Cork Mental Health Services Strategic Capital Plan. The Plan is for the medium to long term and sets out the requirements of CKCH to deliver acceptable, recovery orientated acute and semi acute environments. Key services for improvement were outlined in this plan requiring a commitment to on-going investment including, but not limited to:

- Plans to construct appropriate residential services in St Stephen's, Glanmire, Co.Cork

The Plan is to develop five households, each comprising of ten single rooms with en-suites with appropriate support rooms e.g. day rooms, sun rooms, dining rooms etc., together with ancillary infrastructure facilities e.g. treatment rooms, internal garden open spaces etc. A full capital submission is currently being worked up on same and once completed the cost for the provision of the said facility will be established.

- Replacement of the St Catherine's facility at St Finbarr's, Cork City.

The Plan is to develop two households, each comprising of ten single beds with en-suites. Each household will have appropriate support rooms e.g. day rooms, sun rooms, dining rooms etc., together with ancillary infrastructure facilities e.g. treatment rooms, internal garden open spaces etc. The said facilities budget is €27m

Included in the plan are also capital works to the following Acute Mental Health Units

- Options Appraisal for Centre for Mental Health Care & Recovery, Bantry
- Refurbishment of the Carraig Mor Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit
- Refurbishment of the Acute Unit at the Mercy Hospital

CKCH MHS are also reviewing the community residential settings across Cork and Kerry, many of them also requiring refurbishment. This strategic review of mental health settings will require a multi-annual capital investment programme and we will need support to make it a reality over the next decade.

Yours sincerely,

**Ms. Deborah Harrington**  
**Acting Head of Service**  
**Mental Health Services**  
**Cork Kerry Community Healthcare**