

25th July 2023

Deputy Brendan Griffin, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann
Dublin 2

PQ ref 36259/23:

“To ask the Minister for Health the current staffing breakdown at West Kerry Community Hospital; how this compares with the numbers at the start of 2023; if extra beds will be opened at the hospital; what specific efforts are being made to recruit new nurses at the hospital; the breakdown of details of advertisements that have been made in 2023; and if he will make a statement on the matter”.

Dear Deputy Griffin,

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.

West Kerry Community Hospital (WKCH) welcomed its first residents in 2010 and is registered with HIQA to accommodate 46 residents. The intention of the HSE is to continue to sustain the current workforce to maintain the 46 beds in the centre into the future. This aligns with the desires of people to remain at home for as long as possible with community supports and the resultant reduced demand for this number of beds. Staffing capacity to allow the hospital to operate at a higher bed level does not currently exist. There have been enormous demands on the health service with nursing staff in particular being in demand to match all service requirements. Recruitment challenges have been particularly acute in some of our more rural locations such as Dingle.

To ensure minimal disruption to the provision of services for the West Kerry region, sustained recruitment efforts have been ongoing to recruit staff for the unit. Recruitment campaigns have been undertaken at national, regional and local level. The local campaigns target prospective qualified candidates based in the Kerry region.

The following table illustrates some of the localised recruitment campaigns advertised since October 2021, the majority of which have been specific to West Kerry Community Hospital:

Date	Publication	Staff Grade
Oct 2021	The Kerryman	Staff Nurses
Nov 2021	The Kerryman	Health Care Assistants
Jan 2022	West Kerry Live	Catering Assistants
Feb 2022	West Kerry Live	Staff Nurses
March 2022	West Kerry Live	Health Care Assistants
June 2022	The Kerryman	Staff Nurses
February 2023	The Kerryman	Staff Nurses (Kerry Community Hospitals)
June 2023	The Kerryman & West Kerry Live	Staff Nurses

In addition, a regional staff nurse recruitment campaign has recently been completed and successful candidates will be panelled for placement across the region.

These targeted campaigns have yielded results and staffing levels have increased in West Kerry Community Hospital across almost every grade since the start of 2022. Extensive efforts continue to recruit staff to WKCH and to overcome the challenges that recruitment to community hospitals in rural locations can present. However, recent unscheduled leave and staff resignations/retirements have temporarily impacted staffing levels at the hospital but Cork Kerry Community Healthcare is actively working to mitigate deficits. An escalated and targeted recruitment drive is underway to ensure that safe staffing levels are maintained. West Kerry Community Hospital provides a valuable service to people living in the West Kerry area and the augmentation of service provision for the local community is a service priority.

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare recognises the remarkable work of all staff in our community hospitals and will continue to invest in our workforce and provide opportunities for growth and advancement. We are committed to providing a quality person-centred approach to all residents in our care and we are engaging productively with staff currently to ensure that WKCH residents continue to receive the highest standard of care in their community from all HSE staff employed in the unit.

I trust this clarifies the position. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Jackie Daly
Head of Service for Older Persons

