



**Head of Service for Older Persons
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare**
Health Service Executive
Caha House, Business & Technology Park
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Cork Eircode: T12 XHT4

Cúram Sláinte Pobail - Corcaigh & Ciarraí
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Teach Caha, Párc Ghnó & Teicneolaíochta
Bóthar na Modh Feirme, Corcaigh
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16th June 2023

Deputy Colm Burke, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann
Dublin 2

PQ ref 26605/23:

“To ask the Minister for Health if he will confirm that the 240 beds which have been lost in public nursing homes and community hospitals in the Cork-Kerry region due to reconfiguration in the past four years, will be replaced by the end of 2023; and if he will make a statement on the matter”.

Dear Deputy Burke,

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.

Maximising capacity in the community in terms of beds, both long-term and short-term, is a priority in the Cork-Kerry area.

As previously outlined in our response to PQ 18472, the number of available community hospital beds has reduced in the Cork Kerry Community Healthcare region. Post-Covid, changes in regulations have led to a reduction in the maximum number of beds in multi-occupancy rooms and some of our units require reconfiguration and refurbishment works to comply with this requirement. Bed capacity has been temporarily impacted in some units while these changes are being implemented. In addition, construction of three new community nursing units is currently underway and this is temporarily impacting bed availability. Most of these beds will be reopened and compliant with new regulations following completion of these essential projects.

Work also continues on converting the former Blarney Golf and Leisure Resort into a Community Nursing Unit and the new extension at Heather House will further enhance public bed capacity in the region.

We have previously outlined the staff recruitment and retention challenges being encountered in the healthcare sector, including residential services, and these challenges can have an impact on bed capacity. Recruitment campaigns are ongoing in an effort to attract staff to work in our community hospitals, including those hospitals in remote rural locations. Targeted local campaigns have been aimed at prospective qualified candidates based in such locations and have increased staffing levels at some of our geographically distant units to ensure that they can operate safely at their registered capacity.

While refurbishment works to align bed configuration with regulatory requirements has impacted bed capacity in some units, the development of the new units and extensions outlined above will relieve overall bed capacity issues in the Cork/Kerry region, pending retention and recruitment of required



staff, with some projects scheduled for completion in 2023 and others due to complete in 2024. Opening of these beds will be subject to registration by HIQA.

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare is committed to continuously reviewing our services in line with population health planning and Sláintecare principles to facilitate the ongoing development of modern services across the region.

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 People

