

8<sup>th</sup> March, 2023

Seán Canney T.D.  
St David's  
The Mall  
Tuam  
Co Galway

**Ref: PQ ref 12152/23 – Relocation of St. Brendan's Day Services**

Dear Deputy Canney,

I refer parliamentary question Ref: 12152/23 uploaded on the PAD System on the 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2023 due for response on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023 regarding representation you have received in respect of St. Brendan's Day Services, Loughrea, Co. Galway. The following response outlines the current position.

**Background**

St Brendan's Community Nursing Unit (CNU) in Loughrea is also home to the Seven Springs day care service for older people. In 2017, in an inspection, HIQA were not satisfied with the amount of circulating space available for residents of the CNU and there was a requirement that Community Healthcare West identify additional circulatory space that could be made available to the residents of the CNU.

A number of options were considered in order to increase circulatory space as follows:

***Building an extension to the property:*** this was considered but the advice from Estates was that it was not possible due to the topography of the site.

***Reducing the volume of clients in the circulating space:*** This option involved the scheduling of two meal sittings which would reduce the volume of clients utilising the circulatory space. This was considered but scheduling clients for mealtimes was considered to be reverting back to an institutional model of care and was not considered a viable option for the residents. In addition, it would require additional MTA staff to be on catering duty.

***Converting residential space into circulatory space:*** This was considered but St Brendan's CNU is in high demand as a residential care facility. Although all rooms are not occupied due to staffing difficulties, it is hoped that in future they will be back to full complement as staff become available. Removing long term space permanently was not considered as an appropriate option particularly now when over 100 long term care beds have been removed from private capacity in the area due to private nursing home closures.

**Repurpose the day care space as circulatory space and relocate the day care within the campus:** This option was considered and in 2019 the day care space was made available as circulatory space to the residents. This satisfied the HIQA requirement and St Brendan's subsequently became fully compliant.

### **Current situation**

As day services started to re-open after COVID-19 in late 2021 and into 2022, an alternate space was sought for the Seven Springs day care on the grounds of St Brendan's campus. We are very fortunate that Topping Trust have agreed to a generous donation to the HSE towards funding the project. The plans for the new day care offer a larger day care space to the day service attendees than previous and it also offers an additional outdoor courtyard for the day service users. When operational, the day service attendees will continue to have access to all of the services they had access to, prior to the relocation.

While the renovations to the new space will not be completed until later this year, the day service is and has been operating from the Loughrea Hotel 3 days a week. HIQA have allowed us to continue to operate the day care in the St Brendan's CNU (temporarily) on the remaining one day per week with reduced occupancy.

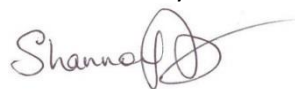
Community Healthcare West is very aware of the benefits of Day Services and the decision to reassign the day-care space for circulatory space was not made lightly. A representation was made to HIQA to allow residents and day care attendees to both utilise the space but HIQA did not consider this a satisfactory solution to the lack of circulatory space for CNU residents.

The current Community Nursing Units being built have taken account of the issue with regard to circulatory space for residents and this has been addressed in newer designs (e.g. Tuam, Roscommon).

Significant efforts have been made to identify an alternate location on the St Brendan's site to continue day care on the campus. The location chosen will provide a larger indoor footprint and an additional outdoor space to the day care attendees. When operational, it will provide the same service as previous and attendees can continue to avail of CNU services (e.g. prayer room, hairdresser) that they previously had access to.

I trust this response addresses the matter you have raised in this instance.

Yours sincerely



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Shannon Glynn  
Head of Service  
Older Peoples Services  
Community Healthcare West