



Ms Holly Cairns, TD
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

31st May 2023

PQ 24264/23*To ask the Minister for Health if his Department and public bodies/agencies that operate under his remit have policies in place to install artificial structures that provide shelter and habitat space for wild species, such as, but not limited to, insect hotels, bat boxes, nesting towers, and beehives; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Holly Cairns

Dear Deputy Cairns,

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.

One of the Strategic Objectives of the, soon to be published, HSE Climate Action Strategy is to “develop a HSE green space framework and supporting implementation plan to optimise the use of green space for the promotion of the health and wellbeing of patients, staff and the local communities”. A Green Spaces Working Group is in the process of being established which will consider the development of biodiversity plans at healthcare sites.

There are a number of ongoing initiatives taking place at local, community and hospital level across the HSE and Section 38/39 organisation Estates. For example, in 2022, Cork University Hospital became the first Irish hospital to be re-awarded a Green Flag for the third time by An Taisce - one of the actions included developing wildflower zones including beehives on hospital grounds.

HSE Capital and Estates are leading Green Spaces Working Group which will progress a pilot programme at a number of sites to inform the development of guidance for healthcare sites in improving green spaces and biodiversity.

HSE Capital & Estates Climate Action & Sustainability office provides minor capital funding for sustainability initiatives in healthcare sites. Projects awarded funding this year include the purchase of nest boxes for Prosper Group Fingal and a number of tree and wildflower planting projects in HSE and Section 38/39 sites to improve habit for native wildlife.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul de Freine', written over a horizontal line.

Paul de Freine
National Director
Capital & Estates