



Deputy Paul Murphy,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

1st August 2024

Dear Deputy Murphy,

The Minister for Health has requested the HSE National Community Operations for Older People to respond directly to your Parliamentary Question;

PQ: 28501/24

To ask the Minister for Health the number of public beds that have closed in nursing homes since 2020; the number that have opened; and the efforts that are being made to secure additional beds.

Between December 2020 and June 2024 there has been a net decrease in bed numbers across both long and short stay bed stock in publicly managed residential facilities for the older person. Please see Table 1 below.

All residential care facilities for the older person must comply with SI293 regulation which dictates the layout and spacing of both the common areas and the individual living space for residents. This regulation has disproportionately impacted on publicly managed care facilities due to the age of their building structures and the past use of multiple occupancy rooms resulting in a high number of bed closures.

| December 2020 | | YTD 2024 - June | | Variance | |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Long Stay Beds | Short Stay Beds | Long Stay Beds | Short Stay Beds | Long Stay Beds | Short Stay Beds |
| 5084 | 2055 | 4913 | 1609 | -171 | -446 |

Table 1: Long and Short Stay Bed Data Variances Dec 2020 – June 2024

Throughout the country and across all CHO areas, numerous projects are currently underway with completion expected in 2024. Additionally, several projects are in various stages of planning, with anticipated completion dates in 2025, 2026, and beyond. These initiatives are part of the ongoing Capital Investment Programme, aimed at refurbishing existing CNUs and constructing new facilities to ensure SI293 compliance with HIQA regulations. This requirement has disproportionately affected publicly managed facilities due to the age of their buildings, leading to a significant number of both permanent and temporary bed closures.

The implementation of this programme will not only bring these units up to current standards but also increase the number of available beds in the system. In 2024 it is



planned that an additional 161 Long Stay and 47 Short Stay beds will be added to the public community beds system. Replacement beds currently planned in 2024 equate to 862 with 691 Long Stay and 171 short stay beds coming back into the system.

A combination of new and replacement beds will continue to be delivered in the coming years.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patricia Wellman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Assistant National Director,
Services for Older people
Access & Integration**