

16th September, 2024

Mr. Christopher O'Sullivan, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ ref 34717/24

"To ask the Minister for Health if, in relation to islander healthcare in Bere Island and Cape Clear Island and the need for 24-hour nursing cover, any progress has been made on sourcing same; and if he will make a statement on the matter"

Dear Deputy O'Sullivan,

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.

The Nursing service on Bere Island is Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm. During periods of planned and unplanned leave nursing cover is sought from Castletownbere Primary Care Centre for essential calls. The Nursing Service on the island is not an emergency service nor is it an appropriate service for individuals who need to be seen by a GP either inside or outside practice hours.

Nursing cover on Cape Clear Island is 24/7. At present there is one Nurse working on the island. The Nurse is "on-call" for emergencies by day and night, notwithstanding this, people are encouraged in the first instance to call the emergency services in the event of an emergency to ensure care outside the remit of the Nurse is delivered in a timely way.

Approval for a second Nurse is in place. Despite a number of attempts to fill the post from National and local panels the post remains vacant. During periods of planned and unplanned leave of the Nurse on the island, nursing cover is sought from the cohort of Nurses in West Cork Public Health Nurse service, invariably there is no staff member available. During nursing leave, South-doc and the GPs locally are advised of same.

Nursing caseloads on both islands remain small 5 clients on the active caseload on Cape Clear Island and 28 clients over 65years active caseload on Bere Island.

If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Priscilla Lynch
Head of Service - Primary Care,
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare