

Head of Service for Older Persons
HSE South West - Health Service Executive
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Ceann na Seirbhíse do Dhaoine Scothaosta
FSS Iardheiscirt -Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Teach Caha, Párc Ghnó & Teicneolaíochta
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12th May 2025

Deputy Michael Cahill, T.D.,
Dail Eireann
Dublin 2

PQ ref 19838/25:

“To ask the Minister for Health if she will intervene and provide the necessary staff and open the essential additional beds in West Kerry Community Hospital and bring the hospital's original intended capacity up to 72 beds as a matter of priority; and if she will make a statement on the matter”.

Details Supplied: West Kerry Community Hospital was built for the benefit of the people of Dingle West Kerry. Today, it is almost impossible to get a bed there. Patients being discharged from UHK CUH from outside West Kerry can more often than not end up in West Kerry Community Hospital, while at the same time West Kerry patients can not get a bed in their local Hospital. The system works on a first available bed basis, which I can understand. However, it makes no sense placing patients a 2 and a half hour drive (5 hour return trip) from their home and loved ones when you have a Community Hospital within a 10 to 15 minute drive. These beds must be opened ASAP.

Dear Deputy Cahill,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Questions, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

HSE South West is working to provide additional beds at West Kerry Community Hospital so that we can provide an enhanced service for the local community. However, plans to increase capacity are dependent on staffing levels and the outcome of ongoing recruitment campaigns. We are continuing our intensive efforts to recruit staff of all grades for West Kerry Community Hospital, and these efforts have encompassed local, national and international campaigns.

However, there are well documented challenges in recruiting staff to some of our facilities in more rural locations. West Kerry Community Hospital's location on a peninsula can make recruitment even more challenging. In addition, we can experience temporary staff shortages due to retirements, resignations and various other leave including maternity leave and sick leave.

Multiple recruitment campaigns have been run in relation to West Kerry Community Hospital, but unfortunately these recruitment efforts have had limited success. We continue vigorous efforts to attract candidates to roles at the hospital.

We have an obligation to make sure that we deliver care in a safe and appropriate manner at all of our centres, including West Kerry Community Hospital. We have to ensure that the number and type of staff working in each centre is appropriate to meet the needs of the residents, so that they continue to receive the highest standard of care.

Our goal remains to increase capacity at West Kerry Community Hospital once adequate staffing levels are in place.

I trust this clarifies the position and if you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Jackie Daly
Head of Service for Older Persons

