

Head of Service for Older Persons
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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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14th July 2025

Deputy Danny Healy-Rae, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann
Dublin 2

PQ ref 36103/25:

“To ask the Minister for Health the number of long stay and short stay beds that remain unused in Kenmare Community Hospital County Kerry; and if she will make a statement on the matter”.

PQ ref 36104/25:

“To ask the Minister for Health if all the beds in Kenmare Community Hospital Kerry have ever been used since it was opened; if not, the reason; and if she will make a statement on the matter”.

PQ ref 36107/25:

“To ask the Minister for Health the complement of nursing staff required in Kenmare Community Hospital, Kerry in order to open all the beds there”.

PQ ref 36108/25:

“To ask the Minister for Health the number of beds used at one time for respite in Kenmare Community Hospital, Kerry”.

Dear Deputy Healy-Rae,

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.

Kenmare Community Nursing Unit is located on the outskirts of the town of Kenmare and is currently registered with HIQA to accommodate 35 residents. The changing needs of residents with regard to their complexity and specific regulatory compliance requirements govern the provision of bed capacity in today's healthcare landscape to ensure delivery in a safe and appropriate manner.

With regard to **PQ ref 36103/25**, Kenmare CNU is currently accommodating 28 residents; 13 long stay residents and 15 short stay residents. 7 beds are currently closed due to staff shortages but the intention is to enhance capacity at the unit once adequate staffing levels are in place to ensure the safety of our residents and staff. The number and skill mix of staff has to be appropriate to meet the needs of the residents living in the unit. We need to recruit sufficient staff numbers to open additional beds against the background of significant ongoing recruitment challenges being experienced by the HSE at this time. It can be difficult to fill new and existing vacancies in specific rural locations but all efforts are being made to increase staff numbers through intensive recruitment efforts. Any increase in capacity at the hospital would require registration of the additional beds with HIQA.

In relation to **PQ ref 36104/25**, the maximum number of residents that can be accommodated at the CNU is 41 with 6 beds currently not registered. The approach to the assessment of a residential unit by HIQA is covered by legislation, regulations and National Standards and may change over time, such as since a previous inspection, due to a number of factors including changes to the needs of residents, size and layout of the centre or changes

in the profile of staffing and skill-mix. The most recent registration of the unit was set by HIQA at 35 beds based on the current staff and resident profile.

With regard to **PQ ref 36107/25**, approval to fill nursing and non-nursing posts to open the additional 7 beds at Kenmare CNU has been granted and final negotiations with staff representatives are on-going, with the expectation of agreement being reached shortly to open these beds.

In relation to **PQ ref 36108/25**, respite beds are categorised as short stay beds; short stay beds can incorporate respite, convalescent, palliative, rehabilitation or transitional care beds. At this point in time, two beds are designated as respite beds at Kenmare CNU. However, it is important to note that respite beds can be interchangeable for use in response to particular service needs and therefore the total number of respite beds can fluctuate due to this interchangeability.

HSE South West's goal is to enhance capacity at Kenmare CNU once adequate staffing levels are in place to ensure the safety of our residents and staff. We have endeavoured to combat any staff shortages in recent years through the launch of various successful recruitment campaigns and the unit has been maintained at safe staffing levels which meet operational requirements. HSE South West is committed to ensuring that optimal services are provided to the Kenmare community and the wider Kerry region.

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