

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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26th June 2025

Deputy Michael Cahill, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann
Dublin 2

PQ ref 34044/25

“To ask the Minister for Health to immediately introduce incentives to attract the required staff to such places as West Kerry Community Hospital on the Dingle Peninsula in South Kerry, where the HSE has confirmed that beds remain unoccupied at the facility, due to staffing shortages; and if she will make a statement on the matter”.

Dear Deputy Cahill,

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.

Challenges in recruiting staff to some of our more rural hospital locations are well documented. West Kerry Community Hospital's location on a peninsula can make recruitment even more challenging and such challenges can be exacerbated by temporary staff shortages due to retirements, resignations and various other leave including maternity leave and sick leave. Unfortunately, staff shortages can impact bed capacity at the hospital at times.

The number of beds open at any time at West Kerry Community Hospital is dependent on safe staffing levels and this is monitored on an on-going basis in line with recruitment of staff. Bed capacity is configured around adequate staffing levels and an appropriate staff skill-mix has to be in place to ensure the safety of both our residents and our staff.

Every effort is made to fill vacancies that arise at the hospital in a challenging recruitment environment. Multiple recruitment campaigns have been run in relation to West Kerry Community Hospital. We continue vigorous efforts to attract candidates to roles at the unit, encompassing local, national and international campaigns. We are constantly reviewing our recruitment strategies and have utilised a wide range of avenues including local publications, local radio, social media campaigns as well as reviewing applications under wider regional and national campaigns. We will continue to explore all feasible options to ensure that we can access the widest pool of potential candidates for posts at the hospital and maximise the services we provide to the West Kerry community.

Provision of incentives to attract required staff to work within our rural community hospitals is not currently provided for within HSE recruitment policies aligned to the code of practice for recruitment which is underpinned by the Commission for Public Service Appointments.

Our goal remains to increase capacity at West Kerry Community Hospital once adequate staffing levels are in place and all avenues will continue to be explored in this regard. We are obliged to deliver care in a safe and appropriate manner at West Kerry Community Hospital and to ensure that the number and type of staff is appropriate to meet the needs of the residents, so that they can continue to receive the highest standard of care.

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

