



12th June 2025

Deputy Michael Cahill,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Cahill,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the following Parliamentary Questions, which were submitted to this Department for response.

PQ 23980/25

To ask the Minister for Health to urgently address the current situation, whereby vulnerable elderly sick people in need of nursing home care, either short or long-term, are being placed in nursing homes miles away from their families and friends (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter.

The Health Service Executive is committed to ensuring that every older person who requires a bed in a nursing home, receive a level of care which comprehensively meets their individual needs, in a location which supports their assessed needs and well-being. The HSE understands the importance of providing a nursing home placement within the older person's catchment area as this allows for continued connections with families, friends and the wider community.

To ensure the older person is facilitated within their catchment area they and their family representative are encouraged to place the older persons name on the waiting lists of their preferred nursing homes when applying for the Nursing Home Support Scheme (NHSS). Under the Nursing Homes Support Scheme (NHSS or Fair Deal), all applicants have the right to choose their preferred nursing home—public or private—provided that a bed is available and the facility can meet their assessed requirements.

Unfortunately due to demand there are instances in which an alternative location has to be secured for the older person while awaiting a bed in their preferred nursing home. When a bed does become available, the nursing home will complete a pre-admission assessment of the person as to determine if the older persons care needs can be managed within the nursing home. This pre-admission assessment is a Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) requirement.

In a minority of cases where the older person has distinct needs and where local Nursing homes have been unable to meet the needs of the older person, nursing homes that can meet the needs of the older person will be considered even if that means it is outside of area. This is



always a last resort and the decision is made in conjunction with the older person or their Decision Making Representative and family.

I trust this information will be of assistance to you but should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Patricia Whelehan
Assistant National Director
Services for Older People – Access & Integration