

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
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3rd June 2025

Minister Michael Healy-Rae,
Dáil Éireann
Dublin 2

PQ ref 27702/25

“To ask the Minister for Health if she has any plans to reinstate the two hospice units in St. Anne's Community Hospital in Caherciveen (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter”.

Details Supplied: Minister the loss of these hospice units are a huge loss to the Community of the Iveragh Peninsula. They are very much needed in this area . It is important that these units would be reinstated.

Dear Minister 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.

Challenges exist in recruiting staff to some of our more rural community hospital locations, including Cahirciveen Community Hospital. Staff shortages can temporarily occur in our community hospitals as a result of retirements, resignations and various other leave including flexible working time arrangements which are available to our staff. The peninsula location of Cahirciveen Community hospital is an added factor. HSE South West has undertaken many recruitment initiatives, at both a national and international level, to fill positions at our community hospitals and maintain or increase capacity against a backdrop of a limited pool of available candidates, which is reflective of the recruitment challenges being experienced in the health sector.

To ensure the safety of both our residents and our staff, bed capacity is dependent on adequate staffing levels and requires an appropriate staff skill-mix to be in place.

Cahirciveen Community Hospital has been temporarily impacted by the staffing challenges outlined above and it is acknowledged that four beds are currently unoccupied due to staff shortages. However, it is important to note that the short stay beds currently open at the hospital are not 'ring-fenced' for a specific defined use and can be interchangeable depending on the demand in an area at any particular time. Management at Cahirciveen Community Hospital has continued to strive to ensure that a Palliative Care service is available to the community when required. When a Palliative Care case presents, all efforts are made to facilitate this admission and to provide this service to the absolute highest standard.

We are committed to re-opening temporarily-closed beds at the hospital to meet the needs of the local community, contingent on successful recruitment. Provision and maintenance of optimal services for our service-users in Cahirciveen and the wider Kerry region is a HSE priority.

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