



17th September 2025

Deputy Peadar Tóibín,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Re: PQ 46572/25 To ask the Minister for Children; Disability and Equality if the special care unit in Johnstown, Navan is still operational as a support to CDNT teams; if so, the reason the summer July provision was not put in place for parents and students who need it; and the work the special care unit in Johnstown Navan is doing currently – Peadar Tóibín

Dear Deputy Tóibín

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. I have examined the matter and outlined the position as follows.

The Special care unit was always a part of St Mary's Special school (SMSS), two classrooms were allocated to this outreach site in the Bailis Building in Johnstown as the former St Mary's school site did not have provision for these two additional classes.

These classrooms supported the students with complex medical needs. It was always the understanding that when St Mary's Special School had their new school built that the two classrooms within the Special Care Unit (SCU), Bailis building would transition to the new St Mary's special school.

The SCU has ceased operation within the Bailis building as of April 2025, due to the new school being opened.

As part of the Memorandum of Understanding between the HSE & Board of Management (BOM) at St Mary's special school, it was agreed that the Registered nurses would be relocated to SMSS with the children.

The Care assistant's role within the school setting was not required as the SNA role is the recognised role in place within the department of education.

The roles & responsibilities of the SNA were in line with that of a care assistant.

The care assistants were given various options for relocating within the other teams within LMDS- these included, residential houses, Children's Disability Network teams (CDNT)etc.

Expressions of interests were sought & the care assistants were redeployed to residential settings and to CDNT teams within Louth/Meath Disability Service.

The HSE have engaged with union representatives throughout this whole process to ensure all parties were being included.

Communication with families & students regarding the school move was carried out by the school BOM & principal, as agreed at the HSE & BOM meetings. The HSE corresponded with families on April 3rd 2025 in relation to the upcoming move after the Easter break.

July provision is only provided through the Department of Education and is arranged through each school, based on budgets etc.

Over the past number of years the HSE would have supported children with additional care over the summer months in lieu of the July provision being offered. The students who were enrolled prior to 2018, availed of this additional care supports outside of school term time.

In 2018, the enrolment policy to St Mary's Special School was changed and children enrolled after 2018 availed of school supports as per term time & no additional supports were in place for new students but it remained in place for students on the old enrolment. The HSE would have supported students at various times with additional care as crisis presented. These additional care supports were always reviewed with Disability manager, Director of Nursing office & CDNT CNM2 etc.

In July 2024 all children attending the former 'SCU' availed of the additional supports over a three week period in July, this was after consideration by all relevant parties.

The Bailis building is being explored with other services within Health Service Executive areas who have made requests for both office space and clinical space. There is no formal agreement made to date but same is being explored with different services in order to explore how best to make use of resources available within this setting.

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

Yours sincerely,

Wanetta Duff
General Manager, Disability Services, HSE Louth Meath CHO