



Cheann na Seirbhíse,  
An Príomh-Ospidéal Meabhair-Ghalar, An  
tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Meabhairshláinte  
Fhóirínseach

Diméin Phort Reachrann, Port Reachrann,  
Co. Bhaile Átha Cliath. K36 FD79

Head of Service  
Central Mental Hospital, National  
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Deputy Kathleen Funchion.  
Dail Eireann,  
Leinster House,

Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

7 February 2024

**PQ Number: 47689/23**

**PQuestion: To ask the Minister for Health if he is aware that the practice of night-time confinement in all units (except high-secure) at the National Central Mental Hospital, Portrane, continues to be operational, despite the ceasing of this activity being a condition of its registration, as set out by the Mental Health Commission and HSE, dated 12 May 2023; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Kathleen Funchion**

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Dear Deputy Funchion,

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 the following outlines the position.

The Central Mental Hospital (CMH) relocated from Dundrum to Portrane on 13th November 2022. A condition was attached to the registration of the Approved Centre to cease the practice of night-time confinement, save for high secure units. This condition applies to three wards. Unfortunately, due to the national recruitment challenges experienced across health and social care services, the service did not have the sufficient staffing to comply with this condition by the end of May 2023. The Mental Health Commission (MHC) granted an extension to the end of September 2023.

In the interim, significant progress has occurred in recruiting staff with the necessary skill mix and experience. Based on the current projected start date of new staff, the service aims to have ceased night-time confinement in the three applicable wards by the end of 2023. One ward ended night time confinement in October 2023 with plans in place to end night time confinement in the remaining two wards as soon as possible. The rationale behind this approach is to enable our service appropriate time to induct new staff to ensure a safe and effective outcome for patients and staff. The NFMHS continues to engage with the MHC regarding the revised timeline provided above.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

Pat Bergin  
Head of Service  
National Forensic Mental Health Services