

25th April 2024

Deputy David Cullinane, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann
Dublin 2

PQ ref 15844/24

“To ask the Minister for Health the number of public and fair deal nursing home beds in HSE South West, in tabular form”.

Dear Deputy Cullinane,

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.

The Nursing Homes Support Scheme (NHSS) or ‘Fair Deal’) is a progressive scheme which relieves families of potentially onerous expense and ensures that residential care is available to those who need it. Once an applicant to the scheme is approved, s/he can choose to enter any approved nursing home that has an available bed and can cater for his/her care needs. The applicant can choose a public, private or voluntary nursing home, and their level of contribution is unaffected by their choice of nursing home.

The HSE South West health region encompasses all HSE hospital and community healthcare services in Cork and Kerry. Private nursing homes operate under their own governance structure and operate outside the remit of the HSE in terms of admission and access criteria.

Residential bed data (HSE and private NHSS beds) in this region is set out in the table below:

HSE and Private Nursing Home Beds – HSE South West (February 2024)	HSE Community Nursing Unit Beds	S39 NHSS beds	NHSS Beds – Private Nursing Homes	Total
Cork	703	7	2779	3489
Kerry	207	3	672	882
Total	910	10	3451	4371

With regard to our own HSE residential units, many of which are housed in older buildings, refurbishment works are taking place in a number of our units to comply with the requirements of SI 293 and provide enhanced accommodation for our residents. These works can temporarily impact on bed availability. Any temporarily closed beds should reopen when works are completed pending maintenance of adequate staffing levels to deliver optimal care to our residents. Where staff deficits exist, extensive efforts will continue to recruit for our community hospitals against the background of the current HSE recruitment pause and the significant challenges that recruitment to community hospitals in some of our more rural locations can present.

Private nursing home bed capacity may also periodically fluctuate due to regulatory compliance issues, workforce/staffing challenges and other factors.

I trust this clarifies the position. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jackie Daly". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and 'D'.

Jackie Daly
Head of Service for Older People

