



**Head of Service for Older Persons
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare**
Health Service Executive
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Cúram Sláinte Pobail - Corcaigh & Ciarraí
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15th May 2024

Deputy Niamh Smyth, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann
Dublin 2

PQ ref 21421/24

“To ask the Minister for Health if he will review the embargo on hiring health care assistants in Killarney Community Hospital which is due to open in November 2024”.

Dear Deputy Smyth,

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.

Three Clinical Nursing Units (CNUs) in the Cork Kerry Community Healthcare region are included in a national single bundle of CNUs to be developed by Public Private Partnership (PPP) and all three are currently at construction phase. One of these CNUs will be located in Killarney.

The new Killarney CNU is scheduled for completion at the end of Quarter 4 2024, with commissioning of the new build anticipated in Quarter 1 2025. The new unit will replace the current services provided in St Columbanus Home and the District Hospital (Rehab Unit) and it is envisaged that there will be a phased transfer of residents into the new facility. Transfer of services to the new unit will take place as soon as possible following the completion of the works. It should be noted that the delivery of capital projects is a dynamic process and is subject to the successful completion of the various approval stages, in line with the Public Spending Code, which can impact on the timeline for delivery.

The new CNU will contain 130 beds, comprised of rehabilitation, long term care, community support and dementia-specific beds. Full production kitchen, therapy suites, external spaces and various communal spaces for our residents are also included in the new build. This model creates a person-centred approach focusing on quality of life and providing an environment that reflects the comforts of home, with assistance provided as necessary around the performance of everyday tasks.

Workforce planning for the new unit will be centred on ensuring that safe staffing and appropriate skill mix levels are in place against the background of the current recruitment pause and the limited supply of candidates across many disciplines in the healthcare sector. Our priority is the delivery of safe high-quality care to our residents at all times and facilitation of clear pathways for the transition of patients from the acute sector to the community.


Since the introduction of the current recruitment pause, all vacancies must be filled in accordance with National HR policies and derogation processes. Workforce planning will identify staffing



requirements for the new unit including nursing, healthcare assistant and other staff categories. If the recruitment pause is suspended, recruitment campaigns will be undertaken to ensure that staffing levels which meet operational requirements are put in place. If the recruitment pause continues then, pending derogation approval, we will make every effort to fill sanctioned posts to ensure safe staffing levels and delivery of optimal care to our residents.

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 People

