

16<sup>th</sup> October, 2024

Mr. Danny Healy-Rae, T.D.,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Dublin 2

**PQ ref 41997/24**

**"To ask the Minister for Health to ensure additional funding is allocated for a service (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter."**

**Details supplied: "St Joseph's Day Care Centre in Rathmore, Co. Kerry. provides an invaluable service to the community in a very large catchment area five days a week, this centre is facing very significant deficits this year and next year of over sixty thousand euros each year which will not allow for current services to be maintained, despite discussions and provision of a business case highlighting these deficits to the HSE they have indicated that there will be no additional funding to meet the shortfalls. It is critical that this vital service will be maintained for this community. I am asking that additional funding be allocated to meet these deficits."**

Dear Deputy Healy-Rae,

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.

**Background:**

St. Joseph's Day Care Centre (Rathmore) is operated by Social Action Group Rathmore CLG – they are an independent group and charity who receive Section 39 funding. There are nine Day Care Centres for Older Persons in Kerry - one is HSE run and the other eight services are run and managed by independent boards and they receive S39 funding towards their services.

The group receives Section 39 funding towards the running of the Day Centre (5 days), Meals on Wheels service, laundry service, and dementia specific work and towards maintenance of the housing units.

They have also received once off additional funding towards capital and equipment.

The Day Care Centre has an average of 25 clients per day at the Day Care Centre; 30 clients for the laundry and 26/27 clients for MOW daily. The group cover a large geographical area and provide transport for most of their clients. They have a large proportion of clients with a Dementia diagnosis.

**Issue:**

Additional annual funding is requested by Social Action Group to maintain the delivery of service and ongoing SLA meetings and engagement has taken place with Rathmore in 2024. The projected funding increase includes increased cost to the group in relation to the automatic pension scheme; 10% increase in light and heating costs; as well as the cost to have pay parity between their staff and HSE staff. The increase requested also includes the funding of 50% of the newly appointed CEO's position; a position that the HSE informed the group from 2023 they did not have funding for and were not in a position to support.

The HSE (Community Work Dept and the General Manager Older Persons non-residential services) attend regular service level meetings with Rathmore and since 2022/23 have informed the organisation that there is no additional funding to pay a CEO.

In 2023, the HSE did initiate discussions with Rathmore on possible expansion of services, but funding nationally was not made available and we have informed Rathmore of this.

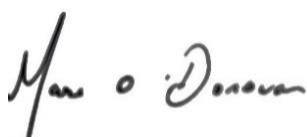
**Steps to resolve the issue raised by the PQ:**

- In 2022, as a result of the business case submitted to the HSE, Rathmore received an increase of 6.5% to support staffing and operational costs in 2023, and this was mainstreamed in 2024
- In 2022 the HSE also gave a once-off inflationary costs to all Day care Centres- this funding was not made available to CHO 4 in 2023/24
- As a result of the WRC agreement with S39 Agencies in December 2023, Rathmore is receiving an additional 8.2% increase for staffing costs in 2024 and going forward. The deficit identified in the "Report on Increased costs for Day Care Centre" attached to the PQ does not account for the increase in funding in relation to the WRC
- The HSE (Community Work Dept and the General Manager Older Persons non-residential services) attend regular service level meetings with Rathmore and since 2023 have informed the organisation that there is no additional funding to pay a CEO
- The pay parity proposal from Rathmore for staff in 2025 amounts to €80,000 and the group has been informed that the HSE does not have the funds to meet this request. This pay parity issue is part of the WRC ruling (part b) of December 2023 and we await further instruction at a national level
- The proposed plan from Rathmore is with the General Manager Older Person (non-residential) office and should funding be made available to the office, the eight voluntary run Day Care Centres in Kerry will be considered for additional funding

The HSE has a long partnership with Social Action Group Rathmore and is indebted to the exceptional work and service offered to older people and families in the area. Section 39 funding has had no significant increase in many years and this is a difficulty in delivering services in the community. Day Care Centres and services are essential in the continuum of care and for supporting discharge and ensuring people age in place and can be cared for at home in their own community.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



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**Mari O'Donovan**  
**Acting Head of Service - Primary Care,**  
**Cork Kerry Community Healthcare**