

Mental Health Commission Statement on Maryborough Centre

The Mental Health Commission would like to express its sincere sympathies to the family and friends of the nine residents of the Maryborough Centre at St Fintan's Hospital in Portlaoise, who passed away over the Easter weekend. We would also like to sympathise with staff, many who have been looking after these patients for many years, as well as the remaining residents.

Where Covid-19 has struck, we have witnessed a deep conviction by healthcare workers to care and protect. Older people, people with a disability or mental health illness deserve a higher and more intensive degree of protection. Together with health staff, we are doing all we can to provide that.

The Commission has been in regular contact with mental health units since the beginning of March to ensure that appropriate and robust measures to deal with the virus are in place. All approved mental health centres continue to notify the Commission of any confirmed or suspected cases of the virus, which we then forward to the HSE as part of an agreed protocol, along with any areas where we have a significant concern.

The Commission was given additional powers at the end of March to risk-rate the 65 approved mental health centres, along with 111 24-hour community residences. Combined, these facilities care for more than 3,800 service users across the country. We are looking at many aspects of each service, including whether or not these facilities have adequate PPE and staff, and adequate facilities to provide isolation if required.

The situation regarding Covid-19 is constantly evolving and the Commission acknowledges the extraordinary pressure on health services at present. The Commission's priority remains the safety and wellbeing of residents and patients and we will continue to do everything in our power to ensure that they are protected as much as possible, and that all centres have appropriate plans in place to treat and care for people who either contract, or are at risk of contracting, Covid-19.

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