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Families unaware disabled adults put on housing list

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The families of profoundly disabled adults whose names were put on a council housing list two years ago have spoken of their shock at the move.



It emerged yesterday that the names of adults, all of them residents of St Mary of the Angels in Beaufort, a residential centre for the profoundly disabled, have been on the council waiting list in Kerry for more than two years — and their families knew nothing about it.

Controversy is surrounding plans which only emerged in recent weeks to decongregate the 76-resident facility near Killarney, in line with the national policy for community living for all persons.

The HSE, and St John of Gods who manage the facility, have told relatives there will be full consultation and this week the minister with responsibility for

persons with disability, Finian McGrath said in the Dáil no one will be forced to move.

However it has now emerged plans were being made to move the residents out as far back as July 2014 and relatives and guardians knew nothing about it. The housing applications for one-bed accommodation were made “in a batch” in July 2014, TD Danny Healy-Rae said. He has called for whoever made the applications to be named and said they should “consider their position”. “This is horrible. The families knew nothing about these applications being lodged,” he said.

Frances O’Connor from Camp discovered on Monday night that the name of her sister Breda O’Mahony might be on the housing list for a one-bedroom house —despite the fact Breda died in April aged 54 and she had lived in the St Mary of the Angels in Beaufort since the age of 38. A council official confirmed to Ms O’Connor on Tuesday that Breda’s application was made in July 2014 and her address was St Mary of the Angels. The family were never told about this.

Jim O’Reilly from Killarney has also found out that his brother Michael, aged 54, who has lived in the facility for 50 years had been placed on the housing list.

Michael cannot read or write, and the family knew nothing about the application in July 2014.

“He needs full-time care for 100% of his needs,” Mr O’Reilly said.

St John of God Community Service said families were written to in May 2014 advising them of the HSE’s policy on community living.

“Reassurance was given to families that individual plans will be made in conjunction with each person and their family. Family members will be contacted on an individual basis to participate in planning for their relatives living in St Mary of the Angels,” a statement said.

Kerry County Council said yesterday it does not comment publicly in relation to specific applications for housing.

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