

St Mary of the Angels, Beaufort. Photo by
Michelle Cooper Galvin

Concerns over residents' spend on therapies

ST MARY OF THE ANGELS' HIQA REPORT

“**INSPECTORS REVIEWED THE COST OF EXTERNAL THERAPIES TO RESIDENTS AND NOTE THESE COSTS WERE VERY HIGH**”

spoke of the high standard of care that staff provided to residents, and they were happy with the supports in place.

Some families acknowledged that they consented to the spending of residents' monies on the provision of external therapies to their family member, but no family was aware of the amount of money spent on external therapies according to HIQA in one of the reports. Both inspections were carried out as follow-ups to determine the level of progress in relation to a compliance-plan drawn up following inspections in November 2019.

Significant improvements were noted from the inspectors in that regard in both units. These included resources to recruit additional staff, and steps were taken to address outstanding fire and safety works.

Overall, the HIQA report found that the service provider was compliant in the majority of the 12 areas examined for both units, and a compliance plan has been drawn up to address issues, particularly in relation to the spend on therapies.

By SINEAD KELLEHER

HEALTH care standards agency HIQA has expressed concerns in relation to the amount of money spent by residents at St Mary of the Angels on external therapies.

The total cumulative cost of external therapies availed of by residents reached more than €47,000 between the two units at the St John of God campus. According to HIQA, in its reports on the St John of God Kerry Services Beaufort Campus Unit Area 1 and Area 2, residents in Area 1 had availed of external therapies which totalled €26,805, while a further €20,723.25 was spent by residents in Area 2.

The unannounced inspection in November of last year in Area 2 coincided with an outbreak of COVID at the centre, and many families expressed concerns in relation to this at the time. The registered provider, St John of God, had notified HIQA of the outbreak. Inspectors said it was evident that the registered provider had taken this breach extremely seriously and that this outbreak had little impact on the residents.

Both reports published by HIQA this month, however, are critical of the spend on such therapies in both units in Beaufort. Inspectors in Area 2, who visited announced said: “Inspectors were not assured that there were effective management systems

in place to ensure that the service was appropriate to residents' needs with the significant amounts of residents' personal funds that were required for external therapies.” HIQA said supports were not in place in relation, to these payments and they were not subject to an annual review.

“It was not evident that each resident had access to and retained control over their finances in this regard. It was not apparent if support was provided to residents to manage their financial affairs and the purchasing of such therapies. Nor was it evident whether the residents consented to such decisions,” the report states.

At the time of the inspection, 37 residents were on campus but interaction

was limited with 11 of those residents due to the outbreak and the pandemic.

In relation to Unit 1, which has 23 residents, inspectors “noted that these [external therapy] costs were very high based on the disposal income that residents had.”

The provider, as requested by the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA), carried out an internal audit pertaining to the cost of all external therapies. A number of residents had spent in excess of €3,000 over a one-year period, although there was an allowance waiver specific to massage but not for the other therapies.

In both reports, HIQA inspectors made contact with families during their visit. The majority of families