

Nursing home fire risk 'tolerable' - report to HIQA

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The healthcare company that owns Droimnín Nursing Home in Stradbally has insisted that the fire risk at the home is 'tolerable' and that 'no major additional controls were required'.

Brookhaven Healthcare has said a recent report by the health service standards authority HIQA noted the completion of an independent fire assessment of nursing home.

The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) called for 'significant' action to be taken to ensure a safe delivery of service. Two status red-level risks identified relating to fire were among an extensive range of issues highlighted in the report published on September 25.

Conor Murphy, Group Operations Director, contacted the Leinster Express / Laois Live in relation to the fire findings at the home which can accommodate 70 male and female residents, over 18 years of age.

"The HIQA report notes that an independent fire risk assessment by an external consultant was completed on 15.05.23 which noted that the risk level of the building was 'tolerable' and that 'no major additional controls were required'," he said.

The commissioning of the fire report was a response to findings of the HIQA report published after an unannounced inspection on May 3 and 4 this year.

HIQA outlined fire-related action items completed which said evacuation training and fire drills will now include vertical escape routes.

It said five new fire evacuation chairs had been purchased for the first floor and all staff have been trained to use this equipment.

HIQA reported that fire compartments and zones have been discussed with the fire safety trainer and evacuation training and drills will now include the full compartments.

It added that evacuation plans also include full compartments with compartment numbers, fire zones within the compartment, resident bedroom numbers, dependency, evacuation equipment needs and the nearest most appropriate exit route.

HIQA said all staff have been advised that the fire doors should not be left open and notices have been placed on the doors to remind staff. It added that the daily means of escape route checks have been updated.

The standards authority reported that fire safety and fire doors is discussed daily at handover and checked each day to ensure they are closed.

A risk assessment was completed for the absence of automatic door closures to bedroom doors. The closing of bedroom doors will be included in simulated fire drills and fire safety training. HIQA said all staff have been made aware of the control measures required as identified in the risk assessment.



Stradbally facility was assessed for operators after HIQA inspection

HIQA added that high risk rooms were cleaned out and all inappropriate items removed. It reported that these high risks are now included on the Health and Safety Walk and checked that they remain free from combustible storage.

Candles are no longer in use in the Centre with battery candles now used.

No oxygen is stored in the building while an exposed wire was addressed and is now resolved.

Another action take was the display of the updated fire safety action plan at the fire alarm panel. The procedures to follow in the event of a fire are prominently displayed in other areas of the centre.

HIQA outlined fire-related action items to be completed.

These included emergency lighting within the centre. This was under review by an external contractor with upgrade work and to be scheduled based on the availability of contractors.

The width of the path outside the dining room exit is also under review by an external contractor. The upgrade work required will be scheduled based on the availability of contractors.

HIQA said the fire risk assessment noted issues with doors. External contractors are due to visit the nursing home to quote for these works which will be scheduled based on the availability of contractors.

The fire risk assessment also noted issues relating to penetrations in fire-rated ceilings relating to hatches, utility pipes, vents/ducts, and light installations. This is also awaiting external contractors to visit to quote for these works which will be scheduled based on the availability of contractors.

External contractors are also due to visit to quote for other fire works including the fire stopping in the electrical room, smoke ventilation from one of the fire escapes, and glazing of the first-floor window. HIQA adds that these works will then be scheduled based on the availability of contractors.

Fairgreen residents get tree plea granted

The residents in of one of the biggest Portlaoise housing estates got good news recently after they requested that overhanging trees be cut back by Laois County Council.

There are hundreds of homes in the Fairgreen estate which lies on the N80 Mountmellick Road in

the county town.

Some residents in the Higgins Park section contacted Cllr Thomasina Connell with their concerns, and she tabled a motion on it to the September meeting of Portlaoise Municipal District.

The Fine Gael public

representative said that she was delighted to hear that by the time of the meeting, the trees had already been trimmed.

"That is very efficient, the residents had concerns," she said.

Cllr Caroline Dwane Stanley, Sinn Féin, seconded the motion.



COMHAIRLE CHONTAE LAOIS
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DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTION SCHEME 2023-2029 PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000, as amended

Laois County Council has ADOPTED a Development Contribution Scheme in accordance with the provisions of Section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended. This decision was taken by the Elected Members at the Council meeting on 6th September 2023. The Scheme sets out the contributions payable in respect of public infrastructure and facilities provided, or to be provided, by or on behalf of the Council, and which benefit developments in County Laois.

Category of Development	Rate of Charge
Urban Residential Where located within urban areas; those areas within the development boundaries of Portlaoise, Portarlinton, Graiguecullen, and Mountmellick as indicated in their respective Local Area Plans as well as the towns and villages as indicated in Volume 2 of the County Development Plan.	€4,000 (regardless of size of dwelling) comprising €2,400 for Roads and €1,600 for Amenities
Rural Residential located outside LAPs and designated settlement boundaries	€2,000 base charge for dwellings up to 200 sq. ms. in size comprising €1,200 for Roads and €800 for Amenities Additional Charges on a floor area band basis as follows: • 201-249 sq.ms. band, €12 per sq. m. over 200 sq. ms., • 250-299 sq.ms. band, €16 per sq. m. over 200 sq. ms., • >300sq.ms. band, €20 per sq. m. over 200 sq. ms.,
Ancillary Residential Extension in excess of exempted development floor area threshold of 40 sq. ms. Sheds, garages and similar type buildings within the site curtilage in excess of the exempted development floor area threshold of 25 sq. ms.	€10 per sq. m. comprising €6 for Roads and €4 for Amenities €10 per sq. m. comprising €6 for Roads and €4 for Amenities

Non-Residential

Category of Development	Rate of Charge
Commercial and Industrial Buildings	€34 per sq. m.
Data Centre	€34 per sq. m.
Agricultural Buildings in excess of a 500 sq.ms. size threshold (This includes equestrian centres, liverys, riding school buildings, etc and horticultural operations)	€3 per sq. m.
Extractive Industry	€0.25 per cubic metre of material based on extraction volumes subject to a minimum charge of €15,000 per hectare
Landfilling with inert material other than for agricultural purposes	€0.25 per cubic metre of material based on importation volumes subject to a minimum charge of €15,000 per hectare
Waste Facility approved either by EPA permit or by Laois County Council permit	€0.25 per cubic metre of material based on importation volumes subject to a minimum charge of €15,000 per hectare
Solar Energy	€12,000 per 1 MW output
Wind Energy	€12,000 per 1 MW output with the following add-ons: • €30,000 for each turbine in the height range of 75-100 metres • €60,000 for each turbine in the height range of >100 metres
Advertisement Structure	€1,000 per structure over 1 sq. m. in size
Uncovered Storage [not ancillary]	€15 per sq. m.
Golf Course	€400 per hectare subject to a minimum charge of €10,000
Deficit in Provision of Car Parking Spaces	€6,000 per space in Greenfield Areas €500 per space in Town Centre Zoned Areas subject to the following: • where the deficit is between 0-5 spaces, no charge will apply, • where the deficit is between 5-10 spaces, 50% of the charge will apply, • where the deficit is >10 spaces, the full charge will apply
Development not in any of the above classes	€40 per sq. m.

The Scheme will be available to view or purchase at Aras an Chontae, Laois County Council, Portlaoise, Co. Laois and at all branches of Laois County Libraries. It may also be viewed on www.laois.ie

The scheme is effective from Friday 20th October 2023.

Ms. Angela McEvoy, Director of Services,
Housing, Regeneration & Planning

LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL
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