

GUIDANCE NOTE FOR PLANNING OF GENERAL PRACTICE CENTRES/PREMISES

Title: Guidance Note for Planning of General Practice Centres/Premises

Date: 22 July 1996

Document Type: Letter

From: Department of Health, Ireland

To: Each Health Board Chief Executive Officer

Re: Guidance note for Planning of General Practice Centres/Premises

Dear CEO,

In recent years there has been an increase in investment in GP Practice centres/premises with funding provided from a mix of GP, Health Board and Department of Health sources. The centres can vary from small developments to accommodate 2/3 General Practitioners to larger developments accommodating General Practitioners, Primary/Community Care Services and, in some cases, Outreach Consultant Clinics, Day Hospitals, Day Centres etc. It is anticipated that investment in such developments will continue for the foreseeable future.

The following is a guidance note which has been prepared by the Department's Hospital Planning Office which, it is hoped, will assist in the optimum planning of new General Practice centres.

The note, because of greatly differing brief requirements for individual developments, does not attempt to be totally comprehensive but rather to identify the key issues that should be considered in the process of procuring a building to deliver the required services.

Typically, about 80% of the capital cost and virtually all of the revenue costs of a development are decided within the first 20% of time spent in the design process which illustrates just how important it is to make the correct decision at the outset of a development. Option Appraisal, which is a systematic approach to examining alternative ways of achieving an identified objective, is very valuable in the process of making decisions. GP developments, because of their varying complexity and service requirements, should be subject to Option Appraisal at the outset. G.P. Unit staff should liaise with Health Board technical staff and General Practitioners, in schemes where costs are being shared between them, to ensure that Option Appraisal is used. Guidance to carrying out Option Appraisal procedures is detailed in the Department of Health document:-

HEALTH FACILITIES PROCUREMENT
CAPITAL WORKS (CONSTRUCTION)
OPTION APPRAISAL PROCEDURES 2C

Published by:-

Hospital Planning Office,
Department of Health
Hawkins House
Dublin 2.

Two publications which contain useful information and relate only to GP accommodation are: -

BUILDING FOR GENERAL PRACTICE

An introductory guide to designing your practice premises
Dermot Folan

Published by: -
The Irish College of General Practitioners
Corrigan House,
Fenian Street,
Dublin 2.

BUILDING FOR HEALTH

A premises manual for General Practice
Richard Barton
Published by: -
Primary and Community Care Directorate
North Thames Regional Health Authority.

Depending on the services being provided, other guidance documentation should be consulted and/or advice obtained to ensure that any proposal is developed as an entity.

Option Appraisal requires the preparation of an outline brief listing the target functional content, the suggested services required, any phasing requirements, cost limits and any other parameters within which the appraisal should be carried out. Following the choice of a preferred option, a detail design brief should be prepared. This brief is of key importance. Irrespective of the size of any development, the procurement process and particularly the preparation of the design brief requires full consultation, in a structured way, with all users to ensure that the proposal is developed as an entity. A poor brief will result in a building which does not offer the full potential for development of the services.

The Brief preparation will follow procedures familiar to Health Boards and will incorporate agreed design parameters based on the primary requirements of a building providing health care services to the public - visual and aural confidentiality, short and direct circulation patterns and a relaxed atmosphere. A fundamental requirement is that reasonable provision shall be made to enable disabled people to have safe and independent access to those parts of the building to which it is appropriate to have access.

The planning and execution of capital projects undertaken by Health Boards should be carried out in accordance with the general guidelines in the document:-

HOSPITAL PLANNING OFFICE GUIDELINES HPO 2/R EXPENDITURE ON CAPITAL PROJECTS BY HEALTH BOARDS

Published by:-
The Hospital Planning Office
Department of Health
Hawkins House
Dublin 2.

Advice and guidance is available to health Boards from Hospital Planning Office staff. Consultations will be welcomed on all technical or administrative matters.

I would be grateful if you would bring the contents of this letter to the attention of your GP Unit staff.

Yours sincerely

Alan Aylward

GMS Division.

22 July 1996