

HSE has 'agreed' new relocation criteria with St Mary's families

BY DÓNAL NOLAN

NEW criteria that must be met before any resident can be moved from the St Mary of the Angels care home in Beaufort have been agreed between the HSE and relatives at a meeting over the controversial issue this week.

HSE Chief Officer for the southwest Ger Reaney and other managers met with members of the SMOA Parents and Relatives Association last Wednesday amid continuing concerns over moves to 'decongregate' the highly-regarded St John of God care home.

Families have been up in arms since it was revealed that plans were underway to move some residents from the Beaufort facility into houses in towns and villages across the county under the HSE's national decongregation policy.

At last week's meeting the HSE agreed several criteria with families concerning relocation, a statement released to The Kerryman revealed.

"The HSE welcomes the link now established with the family representative group. A number of points were agreed at the meeting, including: Residents will only move out of St Mary's if they and their family members agree that it's in their best interests. Any opportunity for residents to live in smaller settings in the community will



St Mary's parent Maria O'Sullivan with a photo of her son Lorcan (right), who is a resident at the care centre.

come after considerable planning and discussion with those residents and their families," they explained.

Any move into the community will only take place in the best interests of the resident and should the move not work out they may be returned to the Beaufort centre: "If any resident moves from St Mary of the Angels, it will be on the basis that it will enhance their life. Anyone who moves will continue to access the services they require. If a resident experiences difficulties after moving out all options will be explored -

including moving back to St Mary's of the Angels for a short or long period of time."

The HSE said it has 'agreed to take on board' a suggestion by families that a new group comprising family members, St John of God and HSE officers be established to work together in the best interests of residents.

"No planning for any move will take place without an open and inclusive discussion with residents and their families based on the assessments and as part of the care-planning process," the statement by the HSE added.