



**Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,**  
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,  
31-33 Sráid Chaitríona, Luimneach.

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7<sup>th</sup> November 2023

Deputy Pauline Tully,  
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Dublin 2.  
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Dear Deputy Tully,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the following parliamentary question, which was submitted to this department for response.

**PQ: 48231/23**

*To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth if the current HSE recruitment pause in regard to management and administration staff, as well as agency staff, will apply to children's disability network teams.*

**HSE Response**

The HSE is the largest employer in the State, with approximately 92,950 whole time equivalent (WTE) direct HSE employees and approximately 50,125 WTE employees of S38 agencies funded by the HSE ( end of September 2023 figures). These figures do not include employees of S39 agencies funded by the HSE for the provision of services.

There has been a period of significant workforce growth of +23,000 net growth since the end of 2019. Successful recruitment campaigns in a number of disciplines has given rise to funded 2023 targets being reached and in many cases have exceeded funded targets by the end of September 2023.

The HSE must ensure an adequate financial control environment as it faces a period where it's funded level, which while quite high, is not adequate for all current costs.

In that context, the CEO of the HSE has issued communication (MEMOs dated 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023 and 13<sup>th</sup> October 2023).

A recruitment pause is now in place for certain grades/ disciplines of staff including Management and Administration staff (Memo of 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023) and more recently, including among others, Patient and client care staff (attendants/healthcare assistants/home help and General Support Staff.



The MEMO explains that the Patient and Client Care staff (HCAs) can fill for services within target for this grade to a maximum of 150 to year end (100 ambulance and 50 balance grades) September census and the number will be controlled by HR contracting.

There is also an immediate cessation on additional Agency staffing above October 13th 2023 levels. (target to reduce as previously set remain in place).

### **Disability Services**

There are currently 20,328 WTEs employed in Disability Services (HSE and S38 agencies) end of September 2023. This is an increase of 2,055 WTEs employed in Disability Services (HSE and S38 agencies) since the end of December 2019.

Disability Service provision includes a wide range of services for children and adults with disabilities which includes for example; Residential Services, Respite Services, Day Services, PA and Home Support Services and Therapeutic Supports.

The majority of disability service provision in Ireland has historically and continues to be provided by voluntary agencies which provide services to people with disabilities. These agencies are funded under Section 38 and Section 39 of the Health Act 2004. The HSE works in partnership with these agencies to ensure the best level of service possible is provided to people with a disability and their families, within the resources available.

The focus of the Recruitment Pause is to control growth in WTE levels to ensure an adequate financial control environment.

All efforts are being made by HSE Disability Services in conjunction with its funded Services Providers to mitigate against any negative effect on key services for people with disabilities.

While there are many disciplines of staff providing services across Disability Services, key front line staff in Disability services, including Nursing and Health & Social Care professionals, are currently exempted from the recruitment pause.


In addition, the level of provision of agency staff in place before 13<sup>th</sup> October 2023 continues (albeit the target to reduce as previously set remains in place).

Priority posts within the HCAs and General Support staff grades, in the short term, are to be filled through internal redeployment.

Senior Management staff in Disability Services, along with staff and Service Providers are endeavouring to work within resources and undertake assessments and prioritisation alongside consideration of all necessary measures.

This includes workforce redeployment, workforce assessment and reconfiguration to maintain equitable workload management alongside options of EOI (Expressions of Interest) for critical posts filling with no NET WTE growth across the HSE.

Yours Sincerely,



**Bernard O'Regan,  
Head of Operations - Disability Services,  
Community Operations**



