

25th June, 2024

Ms. Holly Cairns, T.D.,
 Dáil Éireann,
 Dublin 2

PQ ref 24906/24

“To ask the Minister for Health the number of psychologists, and their grade, recruited to the Cork primary care psychology waiting-list initiative for 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023; the form of recruitment used that is, local or national panel; the rationale in each case; if psychologists were recruited to this waiting-list initiative, in each case, from other Cork primary care psychology services; and if not, if additional staff were recruited from external services.”

Dear Deputy Cairns,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

In Q3 2021 Cork Kerry Community Healthcare received funding for a Primary Care Psychology Waitlist Initiative with funding for the equivalent of 3 professional psychologists, 2 assistant psychologists and supporting administration being approved.

There were significant challenges in recruiting staff to Psychology posts (particularly temporary posts) and all options available were explored to enhance staffing.

- Posts were progressed to National HBS panels at intervals across the years (2021-2023) but we were unable to fill temporary posts from existing panels.
- Local Recruitment processes were undertaken following inability to fill from national panels.
- Local recruitment process included EOI from staff within Health Service Executive psychology services Cork Kerry Community Healthcare; Expression of Interest correspondence to graduating cohorts of relevant doctoral programmes University College Cork / Mary Immaculate College/ University of Limerick/ National University of Ireland, Galway; review of Curriculum Vitae received; consideration of Health Service Executive /Section 38 /Section 39 Expression of Interest regarding overtime/ Specified Purpose Contact existing staff; Agency / LinkedIn profiles; Psychology Graduate Interest Group re Psychology Assistant posts.

Staff for the Waitlist Initiative were recruited mainly through local recruitment processes and temporary higher appointment of seconded internal Primary Care staff identified through local interview processes. Expressions of Interest (EOI) as outlined above did not yield any successful recruitment.

Year	WTE	Grade	Started	Finished
2021	0.8	Staff Grade - seconded	Nov 2021	Jan 2022
	1.0	Staff Grade - recruited	Dec 2021	May 2022
	0.5	Staff Grade - recruited	Dec 2021	
	1.0	Clerical - recruited	Oct 2021	
2022	1.0	Assistant psychologist	Jan 2022	Aug 2022
	1.0	Assistant psychologist	Jan 2022	Sept 2022
	1.0	Assistant psychologist	Jan 2022	Aug 2023

	1.0	Staff Grade Psychologist - seconded THA Senior	March 2022	Jan 2023 – Statutory Leave
	1.0	Assistant psychologist	Nov 2022	Not available to WLI currently
	0.6	Assistant psychologist	Nov 2022	Mar 2024 - Statutory Leave
	1.0	Staff Grade Psychologist	Dec 2022	Sept 2023
2023	1.0	Staff Grade Psychologist - seconded to backfill THA Senior position	Jan 2023 (Stat leave cover)	Summer 2023 – Statutory Leave

In late 2023 and ongoing, as a result of the recruitment embargo vacancies in new and development posts have not been filled nor has cover been achieved for statutory leave. The Waitlist Initiative staffing has reduced to 0.5 WTE staff grade and 0.6 WTE psychology assistant currently. We are waiting derogation of posts in both core psychology services and the Waitlist Initiative.

Yours sincerely,



Priscilla Lynch
Head of Service - Primary Care,
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare