



**Stiúrtóra Náisiúnta
Acmhainní Daonna**
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhísí,
Sláinte Ospidéal Dr. Steevens',
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**National Director
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Roisin Shortall, T.D.

23rd May 2024

PQ 21810/24: To ask the Minister for Health the steps he is taking to ensure that staffing levels and facilities are adequate in all maternity units, labour wards and neonatal units; the impact of the HSE recruitment freeze on maternity care; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Róisín Shortall

Dear Deputy.

The HSE has been through a period of significant workforce growth since end 2019. Successful recruitment campaigns in a number of disciplines have also meant that in many cases funded 2023 targets were reached and indeed exceeded ahead of year end.

The unprecedented levels of additional Government investment in our health services in recent years that has enabled significant expansion in our workforce by +26172 equating to a 22% increase overall since December 2019, with a 8239 net increase in 2023 against a funded target of 6,100 net increase.

Exceeding the funded level of new recruitment ahead of year end 2023 necessitated putting in place the recruitment measures with arrangements in place for

- (1) derogation of specific grades and
- (2) a process whereby services can seek derogation for posts, each of which is assessed by the relevant EMT member and where deemed appropriate submitted to the CEO for decision.

The HSE needs to ensure it has an increasingly adequate control of its funding level as received from Government.

The HSE is currently finalising the 2024 Pay and Numbers Strategy with the Department of Health. Once finalised and advised to services, will underpin the clear requirement to have a robust approach to managing our pay and numbers along with autonomy for Regions and National Services to operate within same

Exemptions to the recruitment pause include existing commitments made to recruit qualified nurses and midwives from overseas and new graduates. Nursing and midwifery posts in speciality areas such as Emergency Departments (ED), critical care, Maternity and Community care areas are all exempt from the recruitment pause.

I trust this clarifies and is of some assistance.

Yours sincerely

**Marie O'Sullivan
National HR**