



Oifig um Cheannasaí Seirbhíse do Chúram Priomhúil
FSS an Mheán Iarthair
Ascaill Bhaile Choimín,
Páirc Gnó an Ráithín,
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15th January 2025

Deputy Conor Sheehan
Leinster House
Kildare St.
Dublin 2

Re: PQ 46703/24 - “To ask the Minister for Health when a Speech & Language Therapist will be appointed at a Primary Care Centre (King’s Island, Limerick); and if he will make a statement on the matter”.

Dear Deputy Sheehan,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in regard to your parliamentary question which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

I can advise that Primary Care Speech & Language Therapy Services are provided for the community/population of Kings Island and the surrounding areas from Kings Island Primary Care Centre.

The Community Healthcare Network (CHN) Manager for North Limerick City confirmed that the Staff Grade Paediatric SLT post in Kings Island has been vacant since January 2024 due to the resignation of the post holder. Since this post became vacant last year, all new referrals have been and will continue to be triaged by Senior SLTs within the North Limerick City Network.

The introduction of the HSE Pay & Numbers Strategy resulted in limited recruitment in both administrative and clinical roles over the past year and this has had a direct impact on the provision of Primary Care Services in the Mid West area.

I can advise that approval has recently been given for the permanent backfilling of the vacant SLT post in Kings Island referenced above. It is anticipated that it could take a number of months to fill this post on a permanent basis as sufficient time is required to secure a suitably qualified candidate and to complete all stages of the recruitment process.

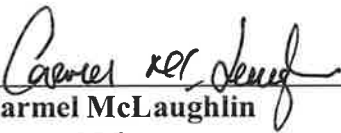
As an interim measure, it has been agreed that a newly graduated Staff Grade Paediatric SLT (employed through agency) will provide a level of cover at Kings Island Primary Care Centre until the post is filled permanently. It is anticipated that this staff member will initially address the existing paediatric caseload within the community, pending the permanent filling of the vacant post.

It is important to note there are two SLTs providing universal and targeted SLT training (e.g. Early Talk Boost, Teaching Children to Listen, Talk Boost Key Stage 1, Speech Sound Development, Vocabulary Development Programmes etc.) for early years settings and Primary Schools in both of the Limerick City Network Areas (North & South), which children and educators residing/working in these areas benefit from. The HSE provides clinical governance for the two SLTs working with ABC Start Right who are providing the targeted programmes outlined above.

I can advise that St. Mary's National School which is covered by Kings Island Primary Care Centre for community services along with five other schools in the area are in receipt of additional support from SLT, Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy Students on an eight to ten week placement from the Health Alliances for Practice-based Professional Education & Engagement (HAPPEE) project. HAPPEE is a University of Limerick community partnership delivering in-school interventions in Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy and Speech & Language Therapy. The SLT Manager advised that SLT supervision is provided by SLTs from the local Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT) and University of Limerick. The HSE has a representative on the HAPPEE Advisory Board.

I trust the information above addresses the issues raised in our representation.

Yours sincerely,



Carmel McLaughlin
General Manager
Primary Care