31 January 2017

Mr. Michael McGrath, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2.

PQ 1290/17
“To ask the Minister for Health when the most recent consultant child and adolescent psychiatrist team lead departed from the child and adolescent mental health services in Cork; the steps that have since been taken to fill the role; the impact this has had on waiting lists; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”

Dear Deputy McGrath,

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.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services based at Team C Western Road have had a permanent consultant vacancy since May 2016. This was filled in a locum capacity but unfortunately the locum left the service on the 3rd of October 2016.

Since that time, recruitment efforts have been ongoing including local and international advertising for a locum Consultant which have not yielded any successful candidate. Unfortunately there is currently a serious shortage of suitably qualified CAMHS consultants both at national and European level. A recruitment process is also underway to permanently fill this post.

The remaining team members, supported by a 0.25 WTE Consultant resource which is also allocated to Team C are working tirelessly to provide the best possible service within the available staffing resource. A key focus of this is on managing clinical risks and prioritising referrals accordingly. Since October, the waiting list has risen by 11%. All efforts are being made to support the team with additional therapy and admin resources during this time of Consultant vacancy to ensure that the best possible service can be provided. We acknowledge that the lack of Consultant cover is having a considerable impact on access to the service and will continue to strive to recruit a replacement.

I trust the above is of some assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Sinead Glennon
Head of Mental Health Services