



National Director, Community Operations
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Stiúrthóir Náisiúnta, Oibríochtaí Pobail
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25/04/219

**Deputy Pat Buckley
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.**

PQ 17237/19

To ask the Minister for Health the number of unpaid assistant psychologist positions operated by the HSE at present and over the past three years; the service the position was linked to; the average hours worked; if the hours were contracted; and if additional financial support was provided

-Pat Buckley

Dear Deputy Buckley,

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

Given the above referenced posts are unpaid, our HR systems do not support us to locate these posts as they are not necessarily recorded, however a count in July 2018 found that there were 7.75 WTE working within community operations in the HSE at that time. There were also 5 unpaid Assistant Psychologists working in the Central Mental Hospital.

The HSE practice of making available a small number of volunteer assistant psychologist (AP) placements goes back at least as far as the mid-1990s. Many such placements are utilised by individuals with a psychology degree who plan on gaining a post graduate qualification in clinical, educational, or counselling Psychology.

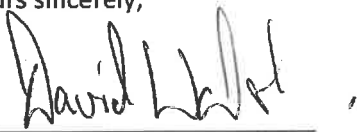
In 2017 the primary care division of the HSE agreed to pilot this grade as part of the pilot of Mental Health Services in Primary Care for Children and Adolescents. This pilot has a duration of two years, is limited to child services in primary care, and has resulted in funding being made available for 114 temporary paid AP positions. The employment of paid APs in other areas is not yet sanctioned.

Forsa (then Impact) advised their support that 'traditional' volunteer APs could continue to be used, and the HSE are in agreement. The long-term future of the grade at both volunteer and paid levels will likely be clarified following the results of the pilot.

It is important to note that a psychology degree is a level 8 academic degree and not a professional qualification. Only around 25% of those that graduate with a psychology degree eventually go on to undertake post graduate study, most use the academic qualification as an entry to a variety of careers outside of psychology. An undergraduate course in psychology requires no supervised clinical practice and therefore is not a professional qualification. The HSE or Department of Health have no input into what is covered within this Level 8 programme and there is wide variability in the degree content across the different 3rd Level instructions offering a degree in Psychology.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Walsh", is written over a horizontal line.

David Walsh,
National Director Community Operations



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24/04/2019

Deputy Fiona O'Loughlin,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 13399/19

To ask the Minister for Health the number of whole-time equivalent psychologist vacancies in primary care by community healthcare organisation; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

-Fiona O'Loughlin

Dear Deputy O'Loughlin,

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

Please see below number of psychologist vacancies per CHO.

Table 1: Psychology Vacancies

CHO	Number of Primary Care WTE Psychologist Vacancies
CHO1	3
CHO 2	6.7
CHO 3	1.4
CHO 4	3.5
CHO 5	2
CHO 6	2
CHO 7	3.5
CHO 8	8
CHO 9	2
Total	32.1

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

David Walsh,
National Director,
Community Operations