

10 December 2019

Minister Brendan Griffin, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ ref 48798/19

“To ask the Minister for Health when the moratorium on the recruitment of occupational therapists in County Kerry will be lifted; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”

Dear Minister Griffin,

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.

The HSE is required by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform to remain within approved staffing levels. There is no national recruitment embargo or moratorium in operation within the HSE at national level or within Cork Kerry Community Healthcare at local level. However, there is a requirement for HSE services to maintain, or achieve, an affordable staffing level that is sustainable in 2019 and 2020, while also prioritising the delivery of safe services.

In light of this, control measures were introduced at a national level in relation to staffing and recruitment. These controls were put in place initially until financial plans were approved for 2019. However, despite Cork Kerry Community Healthcare agreeing its financial plan in early April and adhering to that plan throughout the year, recruitment controls have remained in place.

These control measures require National Director of Community Operations approval for all replacement posts. The administrative process in place regarding same has meant that in some cases in Cork Kerry Community Healthcare the replacement of posts has been delayed. Cork Kerry Community Healthcare currently has more than 33 Whole Time Equivalent Occupational Therapy staff working across Primary Care services, Mental Health Services, Disability Service and Services for Older People in the Kerry area. One Kerry based Occupational Therapist post in Primary Care is currently awaiting National Director approval. In the interim, all referrals to the OT Service in the area affected are reviewed with urgent referrals being prioritised for assessment and existing staff are providing the necessary cover for these urgent referrals.

Yours sincerely,



Ger Reaney
Chief Officer
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare