



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Príomhoifigeach ECSP Ceantar 8
Baile Átha Cliath & Lár Laighin
Oifig an Cheantair
Bóthar an Ardáin
An Tulach Mhór
Co Uíbh Fhailí

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3rd December 2019

Deputy Shane Cassells
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Re: PQ 49550/19: To ask the Minister for Health the number of vacant psychologist posts in County Meath; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Cassells,

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. I have examined the matter and outline the position as follows.

The Meath psychology service is divided across three HSE divisions in primary care, disability services and mental health. The primary care psychology services offers psychology to children and adolescents (0-18years) who present with mild to moderate mental health difficulties. It also provides a service to children in care, and therapy for child victims of sexual, physical and emotional abuse referred to it by Tusla. There are usually 800+ referrals each year to the primary care service.

There are three vacant WTE posts in the primary care psychology service, including one staff grade psychologist and two assistant grade psychologist posts. Permission was recently granted to backfill the two assistant grade posts. We are still awaiting permission to backfill the staff grade psychology post.

Children who present with moderate to severe mental health problems such as ADHD, suicidal ideation for example, are seen within the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service CAMHS. This is the multi-disciplinary service and is located under the mental health division. Psychologists in CAMHS work alongside other related disciplines. There are three psychology posts in CAMHS and currently we have one staff departure this week and a second leaving in January 2020. Permission is being sought to backfill these two posts.

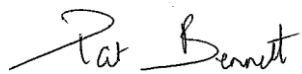
Adults in Co. Meath presenting with moderate to severe mental health problems attend the Adult Mental Health service. Currently we have two vacant psychology posts. Permission was sought to backfill these posts and to date one of these post has been approved for backfill.

Finally, Psychologists who work in the Disability division work within multi-disciplinary teams for children between the ages of 6-18 years. They see children with intellectual, physical and sensory disabilities including autism. There are usually 400+ referrals each year to psychologists in this area. This service has been severely hit with four psychology staff departures in 2019 including one maternity leave. This has had a significant negative impact on the service. Of these vacancies two have been filled and a further two are still waiting for permission from the national office to be filled. Children with disabilities up to the age of 6 years are seen in Meath by psychologists working in Enable Ireland.

Vacant HSE Meath Psychology Posts	Number
Disability Service	2
Primary Care Service	3 (including two assistant psychologists)
CAMHS Service	1
Adult Mental Health	2
Total	8

I trust the above is in order but please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any further queries in this regard.

Yours sincerely,



Pat Bennett
Chief Officer
Midlands Louth Meath Community Health Organisation