

Date 18th May 2020

Deputy Roderic O’Gorman
Dáil Éireann
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

E: roderic.ogorman@oireachtas.ie

Re: Review Panel System – Therapy Staff

PQ4926/20 - To ask the Minister for Health his plans to review the panel system regarding the recruitment of therapy staff such as physiotherapists and occupational therapists in view of the fact there are candidates on such panels for a number of years without being offered positions and subsequently the panels are disbanded and candidates have to apply again; and if he will make a statement on the matter. - Roderic O’Gorman

Dear Deputy O’Gorman

Many thanks for your representation in relation to the national panel system for Therapy Staff.

National Campaigns such as that for Staff Grade Physiotherapist and Staff Grade Occupational Therapist, are undertaken in anticipation of vacancies arising, to ensure the safe and timely filling of posts. Panels are created following these national campaigns to which posts are offered as they arise and are approved for filling.

The HSE operates all its recruitment under legislation Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Act 2004 which is underpinned by the Codes of Practice. This includes guidance from our regulators, the Commission for Public Service Appointments (CPSA).

The CPSA has stated to the HSE that it is anxious to ensure that time limits are applied to panels so that all potentially eligible candidates have an opportunity to demonstrate that they merit appointment. As a result, panels can be created for 12 months but may be extended up to three years.

The CPSA made a recommendation to the HSE that recruitment panels should expire after three years and not to resort to aging panels when making appointments. While it is the CPSA's preference that panels are expired after two years, it is accepted that the HSE could make appointments from panels for up to three years.

Following a recruitment campaign, successful candidates are placed on recruitment panels in order of merit. Should a post become available the candidate with the highest order of merit is offered the opportunity to express interest in the post. In the case where a post does not become available the panel remains active until expiry. While a recruitment panel is active candidates remain on the panel in the event of a post becoming available during the lifespan of the panel.

The HSE recognises that it is frustrating for candidates who have invested a lot of time in the recruitment process, successfully securing a panel position and waiting for posts to become available. However the filling of vacancies is dependent on individual service budgets. ve until expiry. While a recruitment panel is active candidates remain on the panel in the event of a post becoming available during the lifespan of the panel. If you require any further information or clarification please do contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Eithne Fox
Assistant National Director HBS HR