

31st March 2021

Deputy Sean Sherlock,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ ref 15211/21

“To ask the Minister for Health if there is a clear timeframe for bringing senior psychologist staff provision across the three community adult mental health teams in Mallow, Fermoy and Kanturk, County Cork (which serve a combined local population in excess of 93,000) in line with other areas in CHO4; if particular longstanding psychology resource inequities on the Mallow community adult mental health team can be definitively addressed with secure staff contracts to ensure continuity of care for service users among the 39,000 plus population served by the team; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”

Dear Deputy Sherlock,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) – South (Cork & Kerry) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the following Parliamentary Question, which was submitted to this Department for response.

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare has been proactively working to develop the psychology services across Cork Kerry including North Cork in line with Vision for Change (2006) recommendations. In 2014, there were two staff grade psychologists in general adult community teams (each 1 WTE) and one senior psychologist (0.5WTE) in the rehab team. Since this time we have funding in place for 3.8 WTE staff grade posts (general adult teams), 3 WTE senior grade posts (0.8 WTE in Rehab, 0.6 WTE in St. Stephen’s Hospital Campus for long stay residents, 0.6 WTE for the Home Based Treatment Team and 1 WTE for Older Adults). There is one Principal Specialist post (0.5 WTE) to support operational governance. We currently also have one doctoral student on clinical placement work 4 days per week in the rehab team.

This accounts for a substantial increase in the availability and access to mental health psychology services in the area. You will note a very significant increase in senior grade posts going from 0.5 WTE up to 3.0 WTE in the area over the past 6 years. The ratio of Senior to staff grade posts in the area is higher than both West Cork and North Lee. As a population, North Cork should have just under four psychologist covering the general adult community teams (2 per 50,000 population). We currently have 3.8 posts for the population with one of these posts currently vacant and awaiting filling with the National Recruitment Aervice.

There are no plans in place to recruit additional senior grade psychology posts in the area presently, but this of course can be reviewed in time subject to population need and national funding for new development posts. I wish to assure you that we have a robust psychology governance structure in

mental health services, with a strong focus on optimising service provision in line with Vision for Change (2006) and indeed its successor Sharing the Vision (2021). Any new posts and the grading of same will be based on clinical need and staff skill mix required in an area at a point in time.

I trust the above clarifies the queries raised.

Kind Regards,



Mr Hugh Scully
A/General Manager
Mental Health Services
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare

