CC/BL/MC

24th November 2021

Mr Brian Leddin TD,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2

RE: PQ 56199/21

* To ask the Minister for Health if he plans to fund a clinical psychologist for the multidisciplinary diabetes team in University Hospital Limerick; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Brian Leddin

Dear Deputy Leddin,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Questions which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

UL Hospitals Group recognises the need for additional resources within our adult diabetic services. This issue is a core focus for UL Hospitals Group and we are committed to improving this service for our patients. Developing services around insulin pump therapy and structured education in particular require us to fill further specialist posts, including nursing and dietitian posts.

While there is a specialist dietitian working with our paediatric diabetes patients, there is currently no specialist dietitian in post for adults with Type 1 Diabetes. Patients are seen by a ward dietitian as in-patients but there is no specialist dietetic care or outpatient appointments for adult diabetes patients in UHL.

Currently, the adult service in UHL is unable to commence adult patients on insulin pumps due to service demands. We do, however, accept patients established on pumps from elsewhere and these patients are managed under the care of a consultant endocrinologist. The largest group of these patients are those who have transferred from the paediatric diabetes service in UHL. All of our insulin pump patients are seen in University Hospital Limerick.

There are currently no plans in place to appoint a clinical psychologist to our diabetes service. Developing our diabetes services is a core focus for UL Hospitals Group and we are committed to improving this service for our patients.
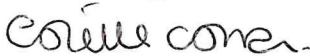
In December 2020, UL Hospitals Group received confirmation of funding to recruit three additional dietetic posts for the treatment of adult diabetes. This funding has been made available through the national clinical programme for diabetes. These posts include two senior dieticians and one staff grade dietician. I can confirm that the recruitment process for these posts is at an advanced stage. We will be able to provide a more precise timeline on when we expect successful candidates to take up post in the near future.

University Hospital Limerick is a member of **UL Hospitals Group** which also comprises: Nenagh Hospital, Ennis Hospital, Croom Orthopaedic Hospital, University Maternity Hospital Limerick and St. John's Hospital (voluntary).

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A second consultant endocrinologist took up post on the 1st October 2020. Two further consultant endocrinology posts have been approved for University Hospital Limerick. These posts are currently being progressed through the approved HR process. It is not possible at this time to give a definitive timeline as to when these posts will be filled.

The Adult Diabetes Service is also supported by a dedicated team of Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNS) and Staff Nurses. Four Diabetic CNS posts have been approved for University Hospital Limerick. Of these, two have been successfully recruited and will commence post over the coming months, the recruitment campaigns are currently ongoing for the other posts. There are also three Diabetic Staff Nurse positions within the Diabetes Unit at UHL, two of these positions have been filled, the recruitment process is currently ongoing to fill the final post.

I trust this clarifies the position, please contact me if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely,

Colette Cowan

**Colette Cowan
Chief Executive Officer
UL Hospitals Group**

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