



CÚRAM SLÁINTE POBAIL
CORCAIGH CIARRAÍ
CORK KERRY
COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE

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Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
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1st March 2022

Deputy Holly Cairns, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ ref 8034/22

“To ask the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question No. 1055 of 31 March 2021, the entire duration in weeks for the CHO staff member mentioned in the response from the submission of their grievance prior to the stage 1 hearing until they received feedback from their stage 2 hearing; the correct approximate duration for a grievance process of these two stages if the relevant HSE policy had been adhered to; and if he will make a statement on the matter”.

Dear Deputy Cairns,

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.

The grievance was received in early 2020. The wait time to respond to this stage 1 grievance was impacted by the suspension of HR processes during the COVID-19 emergency, sick leave and the retirement of key personnel. The total wait time for the stage 1 grievance hearing was 8 months. The longest wait time to a decision in relation to a stage 1 grievance in this time period is 2 months, my understanding is that no grievance has been progressed to a stage 2 grievance hearing in this time period.

The HSE has in place a nationally agreed Grievance Procedure which provides for an agreed framework through which Staff may progress workplace grievances / complaints on matters to include terms and conditions of employment, working environment and working relationships. The type of issues within the scope of the grievance procedure include inter alia the allocation of work; rostering arrangements; granting of overtime, interpretation and application of national/local agreements including matters relating to pay-related benefits; health and safety issues; conduct of disciplinary proceedings; organisational change/new working practices; etc. Within the terms of the agreed grievance procedure, employees have the right to be represented by a Trade Union Official or accompanied by a work colleague throughout the engagement process. The initial stage of the grievance procedure provides for informal discussions for the purposes to exhausting all efforts to resolve/address a grievance where possible without recourse to the formal stages of the grievance procedure. However, where matters remain unresolved, the agreed framework provides for a formal process on a staged basis which again, seeks to optimise the possibility of resolving matters



locally where possible. Where matters remain unresolved within the formal internal grievance procedure, the agreed policy also provides for the matter to be progressed externally by the Staff member to the State's Industrial Relations machinery to include the Workplace Relations Commission and the Labour Court.

The formal internal procedure has an identified timeframe informing each stage e.g. Stage one provides for a meeting to take place to discuss a grievance raised within seven[7] working days following receipt of the complaint and following same, confirms that a decision on the matter will be conveyed in writing to the employee within seven [7] working days. Stages 2 and 3 are informed by the same timeframe in terms of when the initial meeting is to take place and the timeline for issuing a written decision. Records relating to grievances raised are maintained on a confidential basis in line with HSE record retention policies. A database is not available centrally regarding the adherence or otherwise to the identified timeframes relevant to the formal grievance procedure, however, having regard for the nature of healthcare service delivery and demands, it may be the case that the agreed timeframes require to be extended on occasion. It may also be the case that timeframes may need to be extended at the request of the relevant Staff member for varying reasons. In circumstances where timeframes require to be extended, it would be reasonable to expect that the parties would engage on the relevant grievance/complaint at the earliest possible opportunity and without unnecessary and unwarranted delay.

I trust that this clarifies the question raised.

Yours sincerely,



Kevin Morrison,
A/Head of Mental Health Services
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare