



**Stiúthóra Náisiúnta
Acmhainní Daonna**
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhísí,
Sláinte Ospidéal Dr. Steevens',
Baile Átha Cliath 8, D08 W2A8.

**National Director
Human Resources**
Health Service Executive,
Dr Steevens' Hospital,
Dublin 8, 08 W2A8

**www.hse.ie
@hselive**
t 01 6352319
e nationalhr@hse.ie

David Cullinane T.D.

19th July, 2022

PQ 35352/22 To ask the Minister for Health his plans to expand the number of therapy assistants in the system with the HSE supporting individuals to return to education to qualify as therapists, the supports that would need to be put in place to facilitate such training and education, the estimated number of persons targeted to avail of such education, the estimated costs associated with same, and if he will make a statement on the matter - David Cullinane

Dear Deputy,

I refer to your recent parliamentary question which was sent to the HSE for response.

To advise the Deputy that the HSE employs Occupational Therapy Assistants, Physiotherapy Assistants and Speech & Language Therapy Assistants.

Physiotherapy Assistant (PTA) and Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) roles are relatively new within community settings. With the implementation of the Integrated Care Teams for Older Persons (ICOP) there will be significant investment in these roles. The OTA and the PTA will work under the supervision and guidance of OTs and PTs, and will be an important step in ensuring a good skill mix within the ICOP teams to ensure efficiency in service provision.

Twenty nine PTA roles and twenty OTA roles were approved within phase 1 of the roll out of ICPOP Teams in 2021 and within phase 2 twenty five PTA roles and fourteen OTA roles have been approved.

In total this will see the creation of 88 new Therapy Assistant roles within the Older Persons Ambulatory hubs.

Plans to facilitate existing therapy assistants to become therapists are not developed at this moment. We are continuing to work to the extent possible within existing resources to address critical issues re capacity for practice placement education which is an integral part of all of the entry to practice therapy profession programmes. We are also aware of the critical requirement for detailed workforce planning across the HSCP professions including the therapies and continue to seek resources to enable this work.

I trust that this information is sufficient to meet the Deputy's needs.

Yours sincerely,

Marie O'Sullivan
National HR