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**BY EMAIL ONLY**

Deputy Róisín Shortall  
Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2

27<sup>th</sup> July 2022

**PQ 37160/22 – Deputy Róisín Shortall- To ask the Minister for Health the steps that he is taking to improve training for and the retention of public health doctors in the health service; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Shortall,

Thank you for your representation.

To support recruitment and retention of Public Health Doctors the HSE has progressed a Programme of Public Health Reform to implement the recommendations of the [Crowe Horwath Report](#) on the role, training and career structure of public health physicians in Ireland.

In Q2 2021, the HSE, the Department of Health, and the Irish Medical Organisation reached a landmark agreement to implement a fundamentally reformed and strengthened model for public health in Ireland in line with international best practice and the recommendations of the Crowe Horwath report. To enable the delivery of this model, there was agreement to establish 84 Consultant in Public Health Medicine posts through open competition on a phased basis between June 2021 to December 2023.

Since then, the reform programme has made significant progress in a number of key areas, including:

- Progressing recruitment of Phase 1 priority Consultant in Public Health Medicine posts at pace (27 WTE on boarded; 3 WTE contracted; 2 WTE pre-employment clearances; 2 second round campaigns);
- Securing investment of 17.3m to deliver 250.6 WTE additional permanent resources to deliver enhanced multidisciplinary teams aligned to consultant posts and progressing recruitment of these resources, which is now 91% complete;
- Driving delivery of the first phase of strategic structural reforms aligned to prioritised consultant posts, with the establishment of six new Public Health Areas aligned to Sláintecare Regional Health Areas.

Overall, the Programme of Public Health Reform promises to bring forth a new hub and spoke service delivery model that will enable the recruitment and retention of Public Health Doctors with the capability, authority and multidisciplinary teams necessary to deliver an agile, dynamic, intelligence-led service across all four domains of public health practice (Health Protection, Health Intelligence, Health Service Improvement and Health and Wellbeing). CPHMs will lead appropriately resourced multidisciplinary teams that include surveillance scientists/epidemiologists, senior medical officers, trained contact tracers, administrative and, crucially, robust operations and management support.



With respect to improvements in training, the High Specialist Training in Public Health Medicine curriculum has been reviewed and updated to reflect the Public Health Reform Programme and is being kept under active review. The training sites have been expanded to ensure all public health domains are covered. There are also opportunities for trainees to work at Area and National levels to gain experience across all domains.

I hope this provides you with assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sharon Hayden', written in a cursive style.

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Sharon Hayden  
General Manager  
Office of the CCO