

15th June 2022

Deputy Michael Healy-Rae
Dáil Éireann
Dublin 2

PQ ref 28532/22

“To ask the Minister for Health the steps that are being taken to fill the positions in the mental health care sector (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”

Details Supplied: Minister we have a very serious situation with mental health care in Co Kerry. There seems to be a big problem in filling positions and the delivery of service on the ground is being affected. People are finding it extremely difficult in their roles as they are stretched to the limit. To give proper care and attention to people with disabilities takes man power.

Dear Deputy Healy-Rae,

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

As you may be aware, there are long-standing workforce challenges and although additional investment has been approved for some community services, the ability to recruit and retain the community workforce is an on-going significant issue. These workforce challenges have grown over the last 2 years as a result of competing priorities to deliver essential programmes of work including vaccination services, test and trace services, the implementation of key policies as well as on-going operational challenges of winter, the COVID response and the cyber-attack. It is acknowledged that the number of people on waiting lists for treatment or assessment exceeds Sláinte Care waiting time targets.

With regard to the vacant Consultant Psychiatrist post in South Kerry CAMHS, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare does not expect to have a permanent Consultant in the short-term, so we have put extra support into the team. A dedicated Consultant lead is in place and additional weekend Consultant led clinics are in operation as well as evening Consultant led ADHD clinics. There is a current blend of remote and on-site service with the clinical lead being operated through tele-medicine on a pilot basis.

With regard to the Consultant vacancy within the North Kerry Community Mental Health team, please be advised that every effort is being made by Management in Cork/Kerry Community Healthcare to recruit a locum Consultant Psychiatrist to this post and to date these have been unsuccessful. Interim measures are in place which includes emergency consultant cover arrangements from within the current consultant cohort in Kerry Mental Health Services.

Among the measures is a pilot proposal which has been submitted to National Office for a Remote Clinical Lead for North Kerry Psychiatry of Later Life Team and this is being considered. It is proposed that the Remote Clinical Lead will be leading the North Kerry sector remotely on a full time basis and will travel to North Kerry every 6 weeks for face to face Multidisciplinary supervision, on call, and review of complex cases. We are also seeking approval for 1 Advanced Nurse Practitioner to support the outpatient clinics and prescribing, Grade IV Administrator to administer the clinics and Psychology Assistant to support the service user during clinical consults. This supports the key principals of Sláintecare in that it provides an effective, person centred service in real time. Kerry Mental Health Services have had the experience of implementing this model of care elsewhere within the service which to date has been a success.

Management in Kerry Mental Health Services have been taking every measure to acquire the necessary resources, clinical and otherwise to ensure a quality service for the people of Kerry going forward.

Kind Regards,



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