



**Oifig an Stiúirthóra Náisiúnta
Géaroibríochtaí**

Aonad 4A, Áras Dargan, An Ceantar Theas,
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Deputy Duncan Smith TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

08.07.22

Re: PQ 32619 / 32620 / 32622

To ask the Minister for Health the number of end of life care co-ordinators that are employed by the HSE; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

[32619/22](#)

To ask the Minister for Health how far below optimum levels of staffing of end of life care co-ordinators employed by the HSE are; and if he will make a statement on the matter

[32620/22](#)

To ask the Minister for Health the number of palliative care consultants that are employed by the HSE; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -

[32621/22](#)

To ask the Minister for Health how far below optimum levels of staffing of palliative care consultants employed by the HSE are; and if he will make a statement on the matter

[32622/22](#)

Dear Deputy Smith,

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. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

Response:

Palliative care is an approach that improves the quality of life of people facing the problems associated with life-limiting illness and supports their families. The palliative care approach focuses on the prevention and relief of suffering by means of assessing and treating pain and other physical, psychosocial or spiritual problems.

The aim of palliative care is to enhance quality of life and, wherever possible to positively influence the course of illness. Palliative care also extends support to families to help them cope with their family member's illness and their own experience of grief and loss.

Appendix I and Appendix I and II set out the current numbers of palliative care consultants and end of life coordinators currently employed across the HSE. It is important to note that palliative and end of life care is an approach to patient center care and many clinicians and service providers undertake this approach. In this context, Palliative Care Consultants are supported by a wide range of staff such as nurses, clinical nurse specialists and other clinicians who provide direct care and support to patients and their families.

On the issue of end of life coordinators and given the importance of this role, please be aware that the HSE identified funding for these posts from within current budgets. The HSE has increased the number of end of life coordinator posts across hospitals over the last 5 years, targeting posts for all Model 4 hospitals. The HSE hopes to further develop these posts in all Model 3 hospitals over the coming period.



There are currently no optimum or national standards for Palliative Care staffing. However, the HSE is aware of both long and short term vacancies associated with Palliative Care staffing posts across the system. This is due to a range of factors such as COVID related staff absences and difficulties in the recruitment of clinical staff.

You will be aware that in December 2021, the Minister for Health announced €10 million in funding for palliative and end-of-life care to continue to enhance the palliative and end of life approach across all health services. This funding was to assist to progress national priorities, including increasing the equitable access to palliative care services across Ireland. Funding was also be used to support palliative care services provided by voluntary organisations and support the financial sustainability of the voluntary hospice sector.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ciaran Browne'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ciaran Browne
Acute Operations – HSE



Appendix I – Palliative Care Consultants

(Jun 2022)	% of total WTE	Total WTE
Total Consultant in Palliative Medicine	100.0%	49

Jun 2022	% of total WTE	Total WTE
Total Consultant in Palliative Medicine	100.0%	49
HSE	70.4%	34
Section 38 Hospitals	54.7%	8
Section 38 Voluntary Agencies	45.3%	7
Section 38	29.6%	14

(Jun 2022)	% of total WTE	Total WTE
Total Consultant in Palliative Medicine	100.0%	49
Children's Health Ireland	7.0%	2
Dublin Midlands Hospital Group	8.0%	2
Ireland East Hospital Group	12.5%	4
RCSI Hospitals Group	10.5%	3
Saolta University Hospital Care	16.6%	5
South/South West Hospital Group	28.0%	8
University of Limerick Hospital Group	17.4%	5
Acute Services	58.9%	29
CHO 1	20.0%	4
CHO 2	15.0%	3
CHO 5	5.0%	1
CHO 6	7.5%	2
CHO 7	30.1%	6
CHO 8	22.4%	4
Community Services	41.1%	20



Appendix II – End of Life Co-coordinators

- St. James Hospital
- MRH Tullamore / Portlaoise
- Naas General Hospital
- Tallagh University Hospital
- Mater Hospital
- St. Vincents Hospital
- St. Lukes Hospital Kilkenny
- Wexford General Hospital
- Beaumont Hospital
- Connolly Hospital
- Cavan Hospital
- Our Lady of Lourdes Drogheda Hospital
- University College Galway Hospital
- Letterkenny
- Mayo
- Sligo
- Cork University Hospital
- Mercy University Hospital
- Uiversity Hospital Kerry
- University Hospital Waterford
- Uiversity Hospital Limerick
- Children's Hospital Ireland