

6th April 2022

Deputy Holly Cairns
Dáil Éireann
Dublin 2

PQ ref 15501/22

“To ask the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question No. 1055 of 31 March 2021, the entire duration in weeks experienced by the CHO4 staff member referred to in the response from the submission of their grievance prior to a stage 1 hearing until they received feedback from their stage 2 hearing which took place subsequent to the HSEs response to Parliamentary Question No. 1055; 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 Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Further to PQ 16972/21 I can confirm the total amount of weeks from the submission of their grievance prior to a stage 1 hearing until they received feedback from stage 2 hearing is 73.5 weeks.

It is important to note 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. Unfortunately, a further delay occurred which delayed commencement of the stage 2 process due to the HSE cyber-attack.

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 the above clarifies the queries raised.

Kind Regards,



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