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6th December 2022

Deputy Shortall
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ 57205/22: To ask the Minister for Health the proposed staffing complement of each regional fertility hub; the number of staff recruited, going through the recruitment process and vacant posts by clinic and role in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Shortall,

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.

A commitment to “introduce a publicly funded model of care for fertility treatment” is included in the Programme for Government. The Model of Care for Infertility was developed by the Department of Health in conjunction with the HSE’s National Women & Infants Health Programme (NWIHP) in order to ensure that infertility issues are addressed through the public health system at the lowest level of clinical intervention necessary. This Model of Care comprises three stages, starting in primary care (i.e., GPs) and extending into secondary care (i.e., Regional Infertility Hubs) and then, where necessary, tertiary care (i.e., IVF, and other advanced assisted human reproduction (AHR) treatments), with patients being referred onwards through structured pathways.

Phase One of the roll-out of the Model of Care has involved the establishment of Regional Infertility Hubs at secondary care level within the six maternity networks, in order to facilitate the management of a significant proportion of patients presenting with infertility issues at this level of intervention. The completion of Phase One of the roll-out will result in fully operational Regional Infertility Hubs in each of the six Regional Health Areas across the country.

Funding of €2m was provided to the HSE to commence Phase One of the roll-out in 2020 and this was utilised specifically in respect of the development of the first four Regional Infertility Hubs – namely, Cork University Maternity Hospital, the Rotunda Hospital, the National Maternity Hospital and the Coombe Women & Infants University Hospital. These four Hubs are currently operational and actively expanding their services in line with the range service envisaged in the Model of Care at this level of intervention.

Additional funding was made available in Budget 2021 to enable the completion of Phase One in 2021, namely the approval and funding of the final two Regional Infertility Hubs, one located within the Saolta Hospital Group, at University Hospital Galway, which is now operational and one within the University

of Limerick Hospital Group, at Nenagh General Hospital where it is anticipated that the hub will be operational by Q1 2023.

The status of the posts filled across the six Regional Infertility Hubs as of November 2022 is:

| | | |
|---|-----|----------|
| Coombe Women & Infants University Hospital | | |
| Consultant Obs & Gynae | 0.5 | Unfilled |
| Consultant Endocrinologist | 0.3 | Filled |
| Clinical Nurse Specialist | 1.0 | Filled |
| Clinical Nurse Specialist | 1.0 | Filled |
| Senior Medical Scientist | 1.0 | Unfilled |
| Administrator Grade IV | 1.0 | Filled |
| National Maternity Hospital | | |
| Consultant Obs & Gynae | 1.0 | Filled |
| Consultant Anaesthetist | 0.2 | Filled |
| Enhanced Theatre Nurses | 0.2 | Unfilled |
| Clinical Nurse Specialist | 0.8 | Filled |
| Enhanced fertility Nurse | 0.8 | Unfilled |
| Senior Medical Scientist | 0.5 | Unfilled |
| Administrator Grade IV | 0.5 | Filled |
| Sonographer | 0.2 | Filled |
| Rotunda Hospital | | |
| Consultant Obs & Gynae | 0.5 | Filled |
| Clinical Nurse Specialist | 1.0 | Filled |
| Clinical Specialist Radiographer | 1.0 | Filled |
| Senior Medical Scientist | 1.0 | Filled |
| Administrator Grade IV | 1.0 | Filled |
| Cork University Maternity Hospital | | |
| Consultant Obs & Gynae | 0.5 | Filled |
| Clinical Nurse Manager 3 | 1.0 | Filled |
| Clinical Nurse Specialist | 1.0 | Filled |
| Senior Medical Scientist | 1.0 | Unfilled |
| Administrator Grade IV | 1.0 | Filled |
| University Hospital Galway | | |
| Clinical Nurse Specialist | 1.0 | Filled |
| Clinical Nurse Specialist | 1.0 | Filled |
| Senior Medical Scientist | 1.0 | Unfilled |
| Grade IV Administrator | 1.0 | Filled |
| Nenagh General Hospital | | |
| Consultant Obs & Gynae | 1.0 | Unfilled |
| Clinical Nurse Specialist | 1.0 | Filled |
| Ultrasonographer | 1.0 | Filled |
| Senior Medical Scientist | 1.0 | Unfilled |
| Grade IV Administrator | 1.0 | Filled |

All posts that remain unfilled are being actively recruited for NWIHP continues to work very closely with each of the Regional Infertility Hubs and the ICGP with a view to implementing a streamlined patient care pathway from primary to secondary to tertiary care as envisaged in the Model of Care.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,



Mary-Jo Biggs, General Manager, National Women and Infants Health Programme