

Deputy Cullinane
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

15TH September 2022

PQ Number: 44426 /22

PQ Question: *To ask the Minister for Health if funding will be provided for the recruitment of additional full-time Consultant Gynaecologists with a special interest in Urogynaecology for Cork University Maternity Hospital, and if he will make a statement on the matter. – David Cullinane.*

Dear Deputy Cullinane

Thank you for your enquiry.

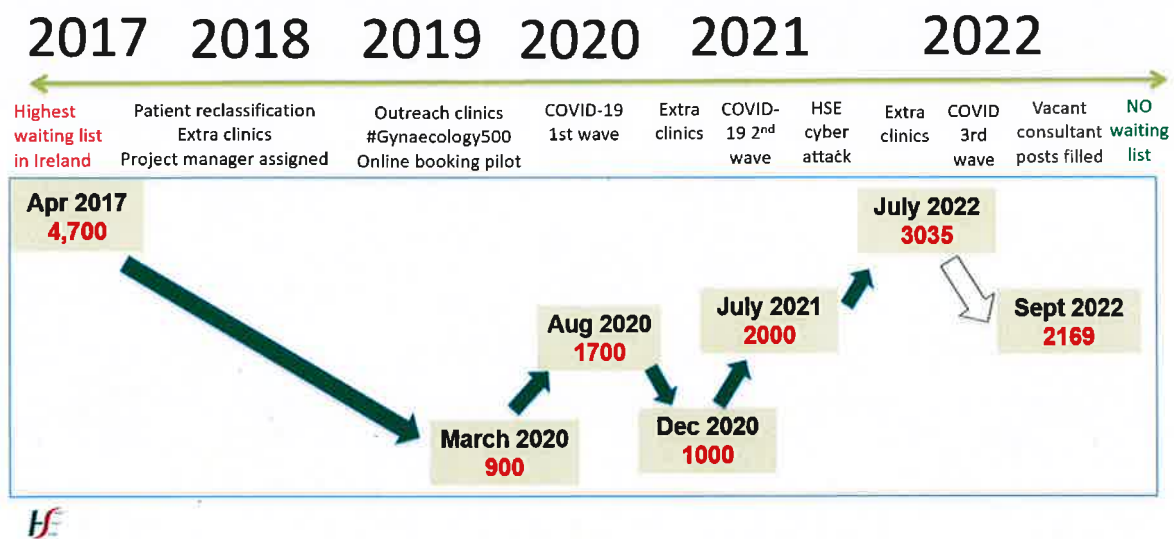
The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position:

CUMH has been identified as one of two designated centres for 'National Mesh Complication Service' in Ireland by the HSE. We have the approved funding for the recruitment of an additional Consultant Urogynaecologist for this service and we have been actively trying to fill this position. Urogynaecology is a very specialised area in Women's Health, there are specific issues around Mesh and this specialist consultant is urgently required for the service. We advertised for this post earlier this year and unfortunately we were unable to recruit a suitable candidate for the position. One very well trained specialist in Urogynaecology who we had hoped would take up the post unfortunately took a similar position elsewhere. This was very disappointing for us, however we have re-advertised this post again and wait the outcome of this campaign. This post is a priority for us at CUMH.

We have been working very hard on our gynaecology waiting lists in CUMH. In 2017 CUMH held the largest waiting list in Ireland for outpatient gynaecology services – 17% of the national total. We had managed to reduce the waiting list to just over 900 patients (down from 4,700 in 2017) by February 2020 - (4% of the national total). However, the effects of the COVID Pandemic and the HSE Cyber-attack impacted greatly on our waiting lists due to cancellations of clinics and as a result our figures rapidly increased. As you can see from the

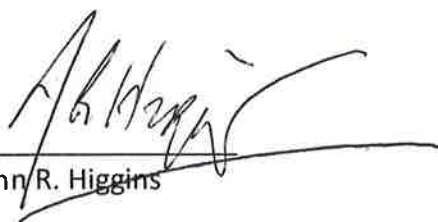
slide below, we are now rapidly improving again. Two new additional Locum Consultant Gynaecologists commenced in July this year and this uplift to our consultant staffing has had a very positive impact on our waiting list numbers. Since they took up their positions from July to September we have reduced our waiting list numbers by 866 patients, which is a reduction of 28%.

CUMH Gynaecology Outpatient Waiting List Journey



We will continue to make every effort we can to improve access for women on our gynaecology waiting list.

Yours sincerely,



John R. Higgins

Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, University College Cork
Clinical Director Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate
South/Southwest Hospital Group