

25th January 2023

Deputy Holly Cairns
Dáil Éireann
Dublin 2

PQ ref 2299/23

“To ask the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question Nos. 322 of 10 November 2022 and 574 of 6 December 2022, the service developments that took place between 8 June and 15 June 2017 (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter.”

Details supplied: “such that a permanent contract senior psychologist post in the North Cork / North Lee Older Adult Mental Health Services was, after being accepted on those advertised terms, changed within that seven day period to a permanent contract senior psychologist post in the general Adult Mental Health North Lee Services, and was not advertised to eligible candidates on those changed terms; the basis in employment law that such a rapid restructuring of a HSE post can be sanctioned after it had been advertised and accepted on different terms; and to ask why the information sought has not been released in response to a previous Parliamentary Question given that it relates not solely to a single employment law case but to service issues that were relevant to many candidates placed on a national recruitment panel who were eligible to express an interest in the post in question and therefore is information that should be transparent, and given that almost four years elapsed before the next permanent contract senior psychologist post was advertised in the Cork Adult Mental Health Services.”

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.

As previously advised, the subject matter of this question is specifically being addressed in an ongoing legal dispute. The Health Service Executive does not wish to jeopardise the determination of the relevant forum by providing further detail on this specific dispute. There are questions of employment law which await determination and setting out the arguments in this forum would risk prejudice to any such determination.

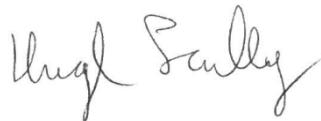
With regard to the perceived rapid restructuring of a HSE post, please note that the successful candidate from the National Panel to a permanent contract post was asked if they would be willing to be reassigned to North Lee Adult Mental Health Services to meet a growing deficit related to a specific/defined mental health need and critical gaps in service in a core multi-disciplinary team. The decision to request the Psychologist to be reassigned was based purely on critical service need, including high clinical risk and on the specific specialist skill set possessed by the Psychologist in question. Aligned to this was the fact that the Older Adult Services in North Cork was not subject to peak demand at that time.

The reassignment was requested to meet service need, therefore no new post was created which would require advertising. A subsequent backfill request set out the requirements for the replacement post in North Cork.

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare and the Department of Psychology recruitment practices are in line with established protocols within the HSE. While there is no nationally agreed internal transfer policy for clinical grade staff, including Health and Social Care professionals, each line manager in consultation with their relevant Head of Service and Chief Officer, are obliged to manage the limited resources as effectively and efficiently as possible. Subsequently, all internal reassignments can only happen on a grade to grade basis where staff members have already been appointed to that grade through a national competitive process. As noted, staff can be reassigned to meet critical service need or staff can request reassignment for personal reasons. Staff are aware any such requests need to be made in writing and can be discussed and reviewed in the context of annual Personal Development Planning meetings. All psychology staff will have demonstrated competency to work in a particular care group/s, as demonstrated at interview for reassignment to be considered.

I trust the above clarified the queries raised.

Kind Regards,



Hugh Scully
A/General Manager
Mental Health Services
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare