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PQ33650/23 To ask the Minister for Health the up-to-date position with regard to the recruitment and funding of all outstanding psycho-oncology service posts in 2023; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Burke,

The Model of Care for Psycho-Oncology (Hospital and Community-based Psychosocial Care for Patients and their families), published in 2020, recommended the establishment and/or enhancement of Multi-Disciplinary Psycho-Oncology Teams (MDTs) in the eight adult cancer centres, St Luke's Radiation Oncology Network (SLRON) and Children's Health Ireland (CHI). The core Psycho-Oncology multi-disciplinary team for adults comprises psychiatry, psychology, social work and nursing. For paediatric services, the core Psycho-Oncology MDT comprises psychology, neuro-psychology, psychiatry, nursing, social work and play therapy.

Prior to the National Cancer Strategy 2017-2026, a number of cancer centres had limited Psycho-Oncology roles in place. The National Cancer Control Programme undertook a full review and allocated new MDT posts to enhance the functioning of these teams, in addition to forming new MDT Psycho-Oncology services across the cancer centres. Significant investment since 2020 has led to the creation of 45 posts for Psycho-Oncology MDTs in cancer centres. To-date 91% of these posts have either been filled or are in recruitment. There are four posts which have yet to be advertised. There are 12 posts in MDTs for Psycho-Oncology that have not been funded to-date.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Caitríona McCarthy

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