



Ceannasaí Náisiúnta Oibríochtaí Meabhairshláinte
Ospidéal Naomh Lómáin,
Baile Phámar Baile Átha Cliath 20.
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Deputy Mark Ward.
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

13th July 2023

PQ Number: 20612/23

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health how many deficits in authorised officer numbers will be addressed by Q4 2023; and if he will make a statement on the matter. – Mark Ward

Dear Deputy Ward,

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.

An “Authorised Officer” (AO) means an officer of the HSE who is of a prescribed rank or grade authorised by the chief executive officer to exercise the powers conferred by Section 9 of the Mental Health Act 2001 to act as an applicant for involuntary admissions to a mental health approved centre.

The rank and grade of “authorised officer” is prescribed as Local Health Manager, General Manager, Grade VIII, Psychiatric Nurse, Occupational Therapist, Psychologist or Social Worker.

Authorised Officers make a positive contribution to service delivery and service user experience in facilitating the least restrictive alternative to involuntary admission to hospital. By taking the onerous role of making an application for admission from family members and by providing a source of knowledge regarding the implementation of the Mental Health Act 2001 to Registered Medical Practitioners, family members and members of the public.

While the HSE’s ability to train AOs was impacted by COVID restrictions, there has been a focus on increasing the number of trained Authorised Officers since April 2022. The number of trained Authorised Officers at May 2023 nationally stands at 211. It is planned to train a further 36 by the end of Quarter 4 2023. These training places will be targeted at the areas with the lowest AO per capita.



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Authorised Officers, May 2023

| CHO Area | Population | Delegated Authorised Officers April 2022 | Delegated Authorised Officers April 2023 | recommended number of AO's @ 4 Per 100,000 | Surplus/deficit |
|--------------|------------|--|--|--|-----------------|
| 1 | 389,048 | 14 | 28 | 16 | 12 |
| 2 | 445,000 | 23 | 30 | 18 | 12 |
| 3 | 379,327 | 14 | 18 | 15 | 3 |
| 4 | 664,533 | 11 | 14 | 26 | -12 |
| 5 | 479,578 | 16 | 20 | 20 | 0 |
| 6 | 364,464 | 8 | 19 | 15 | 4 |
| 7 | 674,071 | 11 | 27 | 27 | 0 |
| 8 | 592,388 | 14 | 27 | 24 | 3 |
| 9 | 581,486 | 12 | 25 | 23 | 2 |
| 0 (CMH) | | 3 | 3 | | |
| Total | | 126 | 211 | 184 | 24 |

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

Tony Mc Cusker
General Manager
National Mental Health Services