

**Corporate Affairs Department**

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**21st September 2023**

Deputy Neasa Hourigan

Dáil Éireann

Leinster House

Kildare Street

Dublin 2

**Re: PQ ref 37669/23** - *To ask the Minister for Health the number of filled genetic counsellor posts in the cancer genetics department in St. James's Hospital; how this compares to international standards; whether any recruitment challenges exist; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

Dear Deputy Hourigan,

St James's Hospital currently has 4.5 filled genetic counsellor posts in our Cancer Genetics Department, with a new full-time staff member commencing in October 2023. We have 9.5 genetic counsellor posts; if all of these were filled, this is still well below international standards. To meet international standards, we would require 20 permanent genetic counselling staff.

Current recruitment challenges are that genetic counsellors are not recognised as an allied professional group and have no HSE grade code or CORU recognition. There is no professional body or training programme for genetic counsellors and there is no defined career pathway, therefore we rely on overseas-trained candidates to apply for positions.

Yours sincerely,



Ms Aisling Collins

Interim Chief Operations Officer