



Ceann Seirbhíse, Cúram Príomhúil
Baile Átha Cliath Theas, Cill Dara & Iarthar Chill Mhantáin
– Cúram Sláinte Pobail
Teach Darach, Páirc na Mílaoise, An Nás, Co. Chill Dara, W91 KDC2

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03/10/2023

Deputy Réada Cronin,
Dáil Eireann,
Dublin 2.

PQ ref 40840/23 - *To ask the Minister for Health the plans in place to accommodate, locally, children who have been informed there will no longer be speech and language therapy available to them in Kilcock from October due to staffing issues; and if he will make a statement on the matter”.*

Dear Deputy Cronin,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in regard to your parliamentary question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for a response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

The HSE can confirm there is currently one paediatric Speech and Language Therapist vacancy in Northwest Kildare Community Healthcare Network (CHN), based in Kilcock Primary Care Centre and another two vacancies will arise in mid-October. One post is currently vacant due to leave and two posts will become vacant in mid-October as those staff are both leaving this area. One post has been filled and the Therapist will commence in their role in January 2024. Agency cover was in place but unfortunately, the Therapist has left the service and no alternate cover available.

Every effort is being made to replace the staff but there are national recruitment challenges within the SLT Service, which significantly affects our ability to fill vacant posts. In the meantime, we are continuing to pursue all options with regards to staffing in Kilcock, including the existing national SLT panel, the new graduate SLT panel, agency recruitment and relocating staff where available and clinically appropriate from other networks within Dublin South, Kildare West Wicklow Community Healthcare. All Community Healthcare Networks are facing similar staffing challenges and each network has very limited capacity. We very much regret this situation and you can be assured we are doing everything we can to fill these vacant positions. All children who were due for more SLT input in Kilcock will be followed up as soon as staffing resources allow. All children who are referred to the SLT Service in Kilcock will be waitlisted in order of date of referral and will be assessed when staffing resources allow.

I trust this information is of assistance to you but if you have any queries or require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Brian Kearney
Head of Service, Primary Care
Dublin South, Kildare & West Wicklow Community Healthcare