



Oifig an Stiúrthoir Cúnta,  
Cúram Príomhúil Rochtain agus Comhthathú,

Seomra 243, Ospidéal Dr Steevens,  
Lána Steevens, Baile Átha Cliath 8.  
D08 W2A8.

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17<sup>th</sup> July 2024

Deputy Cairns,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

**PQ 29250/24 To ask the Minister for Health when the last demand-capacity exercise was carried out for primary care psychology to determine how many staff these services should have.**

**- Holly Cairns**

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Dear Deputy Cairns,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (29250/24) which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Primary Care Psychology is a large provider of psychological services at primary/community level in Ireland. The service grew out of hospital and community care models which are largely one-to-one assessment and intervention models. Today, it provides a range of services of varying intensity, encompassing education, prevention, early intervention and a range of treatments. It also plays a key role in signposting and escalation to secondary and tertiary services, both in psychology and across other disciplines. In 2023, primary care psychology offered approx. 88,000 appointments and saw 12,000 new clients.

In 2021, a HSE National Psychology Project Team published a report entitled '*Establishment of a National Psychology Placement Office and Workforce Planning*'. The report looked at demands in Psychology and workforce planning in order to develop services and gain an understanding of the drivers of demand that impact psychology services.

In the intervening years, the recruitment and retention of Psychologists has presented challenges. Where shortfalls arise, we work to ensure that services are focused on identifying and supporting patients who have the greatest need and by enabling staff to be deployed where necessary to support these patients.



The HSE recruitment pause has also had an impact on recruitment numbers. HSE management continues to work in conjunction with the local areas to monitor performance and address issues as they arise.

I trust this is of assistance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Seán McArt', written over a horizontal line.

**Seán McArt**

General Manager

Primary Care Access & Integration