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General Secretary: Seamus Cody

Mr Kevin Duffy
Chair
Public Service Pay Commission
3rd Floor
St. Stephen's Green House
Earlsfort Terrace
Dublin 2

8th December 2017

Dear Mr Duffy

I write to the Public Service Pay Commission in respect of Health and Social Care Professional Grades in the Public Health Services. I had been in contact with the Commission secretariat, which kindly confirmed that it would accept a submission by the end of this week, as I awaited confirmation of a crucial piece of data from the HSE.

Within the terms of reference set down in respect of the Commission is "seek to establish in the first instance whether and to what extent a difficulty exists in terms of recruitment and retention for specific groups/grades/sectors of the public service". On examination of the HSE report "Our People/Our Workforce – Public Health Service – 2016" (copy of summary enclosed) it would seem that there is a prima facie case that retention is an issue which pertains to the Health and Social care Professionals more so than all but one of the other staff categories. The turnover rate for staff in the health sector was identified in 2016 as 6.5% as an average spread over all categories. By comparison, the turnover rate for therapists was identified as 8% and for other health professionals (which would include social care) was 8.8%. By comparison, the turnover rate for other categories was as follows;

Consultants 8.9%
Nurse Manager 5.8%
Nurse Specialist 3.4%
Staff Nurse 7.9%
Public Health Nurse 3.4%
Management 4.5%
Clerical/Admin 4.5%
Ambulance 4%
Care 5.5%
Support 4.9%

Contd/

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In the report turnover is presented as % headcount leavers as a proportion of monthly headcount. On the basis of this information I would seek that the Commission would examine the matter of staff retention in Health and Social Care Professional Grades.

While there is not a problem in terms of recruitment of these grades, there are factors which contribute to same. The number of college places has greatly increased and accordingly, National Recruitment Services (NRS) has found recruitment of basic grade therapists and professionals to be relatively problem free, with the exception of specialist areas within various disciplines. There is also more difficulty in recruiting into what would be considered as more volatile areas such as residential social care. With the increased number of college places which has provided a supply line of basic grade professionals, an inevitable consequence is that the age demographic (currently at 40.6 years for health professionals – the youngest demographic of all staff categories – average is 44.6 years) will drop significantly, leading to a more fluid workforce and a greater likelihood of an increase in the percentage of leavers.

Furthermore, in the context of the reconfiguration of the Health Services reconfiguration into 9 Community Healthcare Organisations and 7 Hospital Groupings, the demands to populate critical areas with Health Professionals will increase. The Community Healthcare Organisations each have 4 operational streams (Primary Care, Social Care, Health and Well Being, Mental Health). Within each of those four streams, there will be numerous service networks, which in all cases will be headed up by Network Managers, many of whom will be drawn from the Health and Social Care Professional cohort. This in turn will create a demand for an increased number of professionals which will create an added pressure on both the recruitment and retention processes.

IMPACT believes that a prima facie case is evident from the data received and we are seeking that this be considered by the Commission.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Éamonn Donnelly'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large 'E' and 'D'.

Éamonn Donnelly
National Secretary
Health and Welfare Division
IMPACT