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PNA SURVEY REVEALS OVER 700 NURSING VACANCIES IN THE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES NATIONALLY AS RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION CRISIS WORSENS

Thursday 24th November 2022: A national survey conducted by the Psychiatric Nurses Association (PNA) has revealed over 700 mental health nursing staff vacancies in mental health services throughout the country.

The audit which was conducted through PNA branches in the past month shows that the staff recruitment and retention crisis is now impacting on services in every part of the country.

The figures show there are currently 85 nursing vacancies in St Joseph's Mental Health Intellectual Disability Services Portrane Hospital, 66 in St Lomans/Tallaght Dublin, and there are already 25 vacancies in the recently opened National Forensic Mental Health Service (NFMHS) in Portrane. The survey reveals there are vacancies across the country with 60 vacancies throughout Cork, over 40 vacancies in the Galway mental health services and 30 vacancies in Louth/Meath services (see full survey findings below).

PNA General Secretary, Peter Hughes said PNA has warned of the staffing crises in mental health for some time, but this latest survey confirms the full extent of the shortages and there are no indications that these figures will not rise further.

“Staffing shortages have already resulted in the protracted closure of the Linn Dara CAMHS services and the closure of the 16 bed Sub-Acute Unit in the St James Hospital Psychiatric Unit. In recent weeks we saw the opening of the state-of-the-art National Forensic Mental Health Service (NFMHS) in Portrane but with only 110 of its 170 beds open because of a lack of staff to open the full complement of beds and services there. With the full extent of mental health nursing vacancies revealed in our survey, PNA now have a very real concern that this situation will result in further bed closures and curtailment in services.”

“St James, Linn Dara and the NFMHS, are simply the most visible examples of the impacts that nursing shortages are having on mental health services right across the country. We are now seeing the knock-on effects of bed closures on services as the system tries to cope with a steady exodus of staff and the growing number of staffing vacancies at every level.”

“It is totally unacceptable that nursing vacancies have been allowed to increase to such an extent that beds are being closed and vital services are being denied to the communities involved.”

“We are witnessing an exodus of nurses and graduates from our mental health services to pursue opportunities abroad and yet there seems to be no urgency on the part of management to understand why this is happening. We need an urgent, imaginative, and targeted response (to include consideration of the provision of subsidised nursing accommodation) to adequately staff mental health services, including CAMHS services nationally. I will be requesting an urgent engagement with HSE to address these critical developments.”

Branch Name	
National Forensic Mental Health Service (NFMHS) Portrane	25
Linn Dara CAMHS	27
Clare Mental Health Services	25
Cork CAMHS	12
Cork South Lee Mental Health Services	25
Cork North Lee Mental Health Services	12
Dublin North Central	27
Galway CAMHS	7
Kerry North and South Mental Health Services	25
Kildare Mental Health Services	20
Laois/Offaly Mental Health Services	9
Limerick North Tipp MHS	31
Louth/Meath Mental Health Services	30
Mayo Mental Health Services	24
Roscommon Mental Health Service	6
South Tipperary Mental Health Services	17
St. Brendan's, Dublin	39
St. Brigid's, Ballinasloe	12
St. Canice's, Kilkenny	28
St. Dymphna's, Carlow	3
St. Ita's, Portrane	85
St. James's, Dublin	16
St. Loman's/Tallaght Dublin	66
St. Loman's, Mullingar	7
St. Senan's, Enniscorthy	29
St. Stephen's, Cork /Lota	11
University College Hospital, Galway	30
Vergemount/Newcastle	42
Waterford Mental Health Services	18
Total	708

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