



Station House
The Waterways
Sallins
Co. Kildare

PSYCHIATRIC NURSES' ASSOCIATION

Tel: 045852300 Fax: 045855750

Ref: PHEM0619

Mr Stephen Mulvaney
Chief Financial Officer
HSE
Dr. Steeven's Hospital
Dublin 8

27/06/19

Re: Affordable Planned Growth in Health Service Levels During 2019.

Dear Mr Mulvaney,

I am writing to you in relation to the above memo of the 20th June 2019. It is inconceivable that a memo in relation to the curtailment of recruitment is issued in the middle of a major crisis in relation to recruitment and retention of nurses in the mental health and intellectual disability services. Ireland is experiencing the worst nursing crisis in decades; previous policies have resulted in appalling recruitment and retention issues and this memo will severely exacerbate an already critical situation.

The mental health and intellectual disability services currently report hundreds of vacant nursing posts. The PNA conducted a national survey of our branches in November 2017 which identified 500 vacancies. This exercise was repeated in August 2018 which showed the vacancy rate increased by an astonishing 40% to 700 vacancies. As a consequence of the shortages in the Mental Health Services the services development as outlined in Vision for Change 2006 are severely curtailed only 30% of the planned community services have been developed, however, over 60% of the beds have been removed from the services as illustrated in research by the RCSI in 2016.

The reduction in beds and lack of community development has resulted in 120% bed capacity in numerous services with regular occurrences of service users sleeping on chairs and mattresses in Waterford and Kilkenny admission wards. Numerous Mental Health Services have over 20% vacancies in nursing with an unsustainable reliance on overtime and agency.

It is unbelievable that the PNA are reconvening in the WRC tomorrow 28th June in relation to resolving the recruitment and retention crisis and at the same time the HSE issue a memo to severely restrict recruitment.

Retaining and recruiting nurses is extremely challenging due to market forces within the Irish Private Services and from the UK, Australia and Canada.

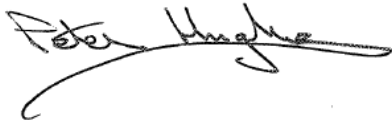
Private Mental Health Providers in Ireland are offering newly qualified nurses a starting salary on the 5th point of the scale, €3,000 sign up and access to a number of allowances.

Our students will graduate in September and due to this “embargo” on recruitment will now be lost to the private sector and overseas.

As we approach peak holiday periods it becomes extremely more difficult to get staff to work overtime. The implementation of this memo will severely impact on service delivery and on the Health & Safety of both service users and staff.

It is imperative that the recruitment of nurses in the Mental Health and intellectual disability services is exempted from any curtailment on recruitment.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Hughes". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mr Peter Hughes
General Secretary

CC: Ms Rosarii Mannion
Mr John Delamere
Mr Paul Byrne