



Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation
Cumann Altraí agus Ban Cabhrach na hÉireann
Working Together

The Whitworth Building
North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7
Tel: 01 664 0600 Fax: 01 661 0466
Email: inmo@inmo.ie
<http://www.inmo.ie> <http://www.nurse2nurse.ie>

General Secretary
Phil NiSheaghda

PNiS/CC

16th July 2019

Ms Anne O'Connor
Deputy Director General
Dr Steevens Hospital
Dublin 8

Re: Cost Curtailment

Dear Anne

I refer to our conversation this morning and also to our meeting on Friday, 6th July with the Director General and yourself and the Director of Human Resources. This meeting was a response to our letter 28th June 2019 (attached for ease of reference) which set out concerns in respect of the manner in which curtailment to services is not protective of front-line services.

At our meeting of the 6th of July assurances were given that front line service would be prioritised protection and that all vacant posts would be filled. Attached for your information a copy of the current situation in some of the services. We are drafting further information from other services to give you a flavour the number of posts now unfilled and blocked due to this memo HSE issued on 20th June 2019.

Furthermore we have information that when impending retirements are notified, there is an instruction not to advertise to fill. We refer particularly to a situation in respect of the immunisation service in Wexford community care area, where the retirement of the Assistant Director of Public Health Nursing who leads the immunisation services, and a community general nurse on the team, are not being advertised ahead of the retirement date, this will mean that there will be no immunisation service in county Wexford as in from the 1st of September 2019.

Additionally this service has now been instructed categorically that they must reduce their agency by 39 hours a week. The agency that is currently used in this community care area is 132.6 hours per week and the current vacancy rate is 292.4. As you can appreciate a weekend service is required and this reduction to agency 39 hours will now remove the ability to provide a weekend nursing service in the community care area in question. The current 3.4 whole time equivalent agency doesn't cover the deficit however it allows essential cases to be dealt with. The removal of a further 39 hours will not allow for the service to be provided. The

conversion to the filling of the two vacancies posts has not been sanctioned and the conversion of agency has equally not been sanctioned.

The section of the memo that issued from Steven Mulvaney on the 20th June 2019, which states that; *“no new posts other than approved and funded developments via the existing national control process or replacement posts, can proceed to offer stage or be put onto the payroll in any CHO, HG or Section 38”*, is the particular instruction that has led to the situation that has now arisen.

We need an absolute position from the HSE that posts in the system, that are vacant can be filled immediately and that Directors of Nursing and Midwifery are entitled to proceed to fill these posts in accordance with the Ministerial order under Section 10 of the Health Act agreed with this organisation in February 2017.

Secondly, we need confirmation that agency personnel currently engaged to provide essential services cannot just be cancelled. This will mean that essential services will not be provided. That includes weekend cover, immunisation cover and such services. The consequences of removing these services is of such high risk that our clinical nurse / midwifery managers cannot issue this instruction as it is unsafe clinically.

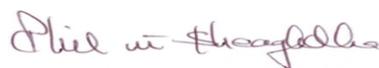
Maternity services are particularly at risk as they are already working with staffing levels below recommended safety thresholds, adding this pause to the mix is simply irresponsible.

Instruction must now issue that restrictions to recruitment and processing of posts as set out in this memo of 20th June are clarified as not applying to nursing and midwifery services.

I request a response by return as this level of risk is now extremely dangerous and places undo pressure on our nursing and midwifery managers trying to fill rosters with instructions of this kind taking precedent over clinical safety.

Thank you for your attention to this note

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PHIL NI SHEAGHDHA
General Secretary

cc. **Paul Reid, HSE Director General**
Rosarii Mannion, National Director of HR