

Date 19th October 2020
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PQ29065/20 To ask the Minister for Health the number of persons that applied for counsellor roles from the recruitment drive be on call for Ireland; the number that were recruited for the position; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Ward

Many thanks for your query in relation to the 'Be on Call for Ireland' initiative and the recruitment of Counsellors.

The majority of COVID-19 related recruited is undertaken by the HSE National Recruitment Service - HBS Recruit and local recruitment offices in acute and community services. To date approximately 5,700 additional staff have recruited through HBS Recruit in response to COVID-19 management and the provision of continuing health and social care services to the population of Ireland. 'Be on Call for Ireland' was an additional recruitment stream to on-going HSE recruitment to harness any additional relevant healthcare sourcing outside national and local recruitment.

The main priority of 'Be on Call for Ireland' initiative was to provide 'job ready' health care professionals to the health services in the event of the anticipated increase in hospital beds and community service staffing requirements. It should be noted that at that time Ireland was potentially facing a similar situation to that of the health services in Spain and Italy. At the time of project launch, the widest possible cohort of potential applicants was given an opportunity to apply to meet the potentially unprecedented service and social care demands. At that time, it was not understood how COVID-19 would impact the delivery of health and social care in Ireland including that of Counselling services.

The emerging and changing needs of the different services became apparent as COVID-19 impacted on the health service. In the case of the Counselling Services provided by the HSE, the recruitment needs are being adequately filled by the existing national recruitment panel which is held by the HSE's recruitment office HBS Recruit. This existing recruitment panel has filled Counsellor roles to date and as of yet there is no requirement to use the additional Counsellor candidate pools registered with the 'Be on Call for Ireland' initiative.

With regards to your question on how many Counsellors registered with the 'Be on Call for Ireland' recruitment initiative- the records show that 100 candidates originally registered as Counsellor being their primary discipline.

I hope this has provided you with the information you have requested and should you require any further information or clarification please do contact us.