



Mr Morgan Nolan
General Manager
National Employee Relations
HSE

Via email only to: morgan.nolan@hse.ie

12th July 2024

Re: Hospital Pharmacy Technicians Review

Dear Morgan,

I am writing, as requested, following our meeting of Monday 24th June 2024. At that meeting, Fórsa laid out the urgent need for a review of the role of Hospital Pharmacy Technicians (HPT) in the HSE and HSE Funded Services.

The rationale for the review is set out as follows:

1. It has been 30 years since the role of Senior Hospital Pharmacy Technician was introduced into the career structure for Hospital Pharmacy Technicians. No formal review has taken place since. There is a need to review the career structure to ensure it is fit for purpose for staff who have chosen the career of HPT and for the service itself.
2. The needs of Hospital Pharmacies have changed significantly in the last three decades. The current job descriptions for basic grade HPTs focus mainly on participating in duties and dispensing e.g. participate in ward top-up, stock rotation and expiry date checking and dispensing prescriptions for patients and staff with senior grades to supervise same. The role of HPTs has evolved far beyond these job descriptions to keep pace with service changes. However, those working in the role have not yet received recognition of same. These roles need to be reviewed with a view to agreeing appropriate pay and grading structures for those in HPT roles.
3. The current recruitment and retention challenges within the Pharmacist grade has seen hospitals expand the role of HPTs. Roles have developed and evolved with increasing responsibilities, and this has intensified since 2022 when pharmacists were added to the critical skills shortage list. The pressure to meet service demands under pharmacist staffing strains has resulted in HPTs being asked to continue to expand their role under minimal supervision.
4. New services are being stood up across different areas of the Health Sector being led by a basic grade HPT. This is not the appropriate grade given the level of responsibility associated and must be reviewed.
5. There is increasing incidence of Hospital Pharmacists who have trained outside of Ireland but who are not eligible for registration with PSI being



offered HPT roles. This is not in keeping with the agreed eligibility criteria in an Irish Context and requires consideration.

6. There is a vast unlocked potential for Pharmacy Services within their current staff allocation in completing a review of HPTs. HPTs are skilled healthcare professionals responsible for a large remit of healthcare services. Some of their key responsibilities involve, but are not limited to purchasing and sourcing medications, invoice approval, price monitoring, staff management, Clozaril dispensing, MDA dispensing, Extemporaneous preparation, Aseptics (Chemotherapy), Robotics, ADC management, ward based duties (not under direct supervision of pharmacist), Medicines Reconciliation, Standard Operating Procedure writing and reviewing, medication safety audits, mentor and training of new staff (HPTs, pharmacists and students), patient counselling, supporting anti-microbial and clinical pharmacists, part of informatics team involved in planning and setting up HMMS and EHR (e.g. New Children's hospital). They are a key part of hospital multi-disciplinary teams.
7. The Hospital Pharmacy Agreement sets out a requirement to encompass HPTs in workforce planning. A review of the role is required to be able to meet this obligation.
8. In addition to the above, there is recognition from all stakeholders that a review of the profession is required given the stated recommendation in 2.4 of the PSI Workforce Intelligence Report published in 2023. It is our strongly held view that an internal review within the Public Health Sector would be a great asset to the broader long-term view committed to in the 2023 report.
9. The review would also have the benefit of crystallising for the HSE and Fórsa what should be prioritised in the upcoming Local Bargaining Process under the Public Service Agreement for HPTs. While not yet agreed, Fórsa's position is that Hospital Pharmacy Technicians will be a bargaining group in their own right.

I understand that you will now revert to DOH upon receipt of this correspondence. I look forward to your update in due course.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda Kelly".

Linda Kelly
National Secretary

cc. Louise Keogh, NAHPT