

Ref:PHEM0925

To All PNA Branches and Member re Graduate Permanent Contracts

09/09/25

Dear Colleagues,

As you are aware the HSE committed to offering all 2025 Graduates permanent contracts in the nearest vacancy to where they trained. This was reaffirmed in the WRC as part of the suspension of our industrial action on April 3rd. Also, as part of that suspension the HSE committed to conduct a review, in conjunction with the PNA, to set out the number of mental health nurses required to run each mental health service. This exercise has been concluded in four of the six Regional Health Areas (RHA) and it is envisaged that it will be completed in the coming weeks.

At the meetings in relation to the review we also sought assurances in each RHA that the 2025 graduates had been offered permanent contracts as part of the HSE commitment. In the past two weeks it has been brought to our attention that only six of the 34 graduates in the Dublin Midlands region had been offered permanent contracts. We wrote to the Regional Executive Officer (REO) on the 22nd of August 2025 outlining the HSE's renegeing of the commitment and also a breach of our WRC agreement.

We received a response from the REO on August 29th which was insufficient to allay our concerns. On Wednesday the 3rd of September we informed the HSE both locally and nationally that if the graduates had not received offers of permanent contracts in the region by Monday 8th September we would be left with no option but to give notice to re commence industrial action. We also escalated the matter to the Minister for Mental Health, Mary Butler, and to Mr Bernard Gloster, HSE Chief Executive Officer. We subsequently had engagement with both at the end of last week.

On Friday the 5th of September we engaged with Mr Gloster to raise our concerns and frustration with the unacceptable delay in offering the graduates permanent contracts. Mr Gloster assured us that all graduates in the region would be offered permanent contracts in the coming days, which has happened to the best of our knowledge. Please see attached letter from Mr Gloster with the commitment that *"all mental health nurse graduates will be offered a position (permanent) no later than 19th September"*.

Mr. Gloster also addressed the issue of other staff nurses on panels. *"I also refer to your concern that there are large numbers of people on panels in specific locations where there are equal amounts of agency utilisation. For clarity I am confirming that any mental health nurse on a permanent panel (entry/basic grade) will be offered a position in a location where there is agency staffing subject to an immediate reduction of agency in that location by that corresponding amount of WTE and I have directed this be expedited to conclude at offers in September and contracts in October. I have prioritised the headcount to allow for this."*

We also wish to acknowledge Minister Butler's support and intervention to help resolve this matter.

We will continue to monitor the situation over the coming weeks and if there are any issues in your area in relation to this matter, please let us know

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Hughes', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Peter Hughes,
General Secretary**