HSE
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

National Health and Safety Function
Workplace Health and Wellbeing Unit
Human Resources Directorate
Midleton community Hospital
Midleton
Co. Cork

6th December 2018

Deputy Louise O'Reilly
Dail Eireann

PQ 47039/18 To ask the Minister for Health the number of assaults that have been recorded against front line staff, including nurses, doctors, social workers, ambulance staff and other health professionals, in each of the years 2008 to 2017 and to date in 2018, by hospital, geographic location and profession in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Louise O'Reilly

Dear Deputy O'Reilly,

I refer to your Parliamentary Question 47039/18 which was forwarded to the HSE for response.

Background

With regard to the above PQ, please see below the report on HSE Assaults on Staff.

To assist with understanding the report/data more fully, I feel it appropriate to firstly give a brief background to the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and to the data in the report. In 2015 the NIMS system was introduced by the SCA. This requires all incidents to be reported through a national centralised system and will ultimately improve the quality of the data. However, the HSE has long been proactive in encouraging staff to report all incidents and this is enshrined in the Corporate Safety Statement, Violence and Aggression policy and Incident Management Framework and Guidance.

An incident can be a harmful Incident (Adverse Event), no harm incident, near miss, dangerous occurrence (reportable circumstance) or complaint.

Please note that the following conditions apply to the data:

- Table 1 shows the data broken down by Hospital Group Location
- Table 2 shows the data broken down by the 'Category of Person'
- All assaults on staff are included
- Assaults include a problem/cause of: physical, verbal or sexual assault on staff in the HSE Hospital Groups (excluding voluntaries), that occurred between 2008 and 30/11/18
- The report was run by "Date of Incident", which is the date on which the incident occurred and is between 01/01/2008 and 30/11/18
- This report is correct as of 07/12/2018
- Create date is as of the 30/11/2018

When considering the figures in the report it should be noted that staff are encouraged to report all "near misses" and incidents – even those that **do not** result in harm. Hence, the number of incident reports should not be considered as indicative of a level of harm. There may also be multiple reports relating to the same incident.

Table 1: HSE Hospital Group Assaults on Staff with year incident occurred between 2008 – November 2018

Location At Level 2	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Grand Total
Group 1 - RCSI Dublin North East Hospital Group (Academic Partner: RCSI)	361	286	183	242	228	83	285	220	235	172	195	**2,490**
Group 2 - Dublin Midlands Hospital Group (Academic Partner: TCD)	151	138	129	154	95	85	157	118	138	157	123	**1,445**
Group 3 - Ireland East Hospital Group (Academic Partner: UCD)	92	100	172	133	102	212	277	168	197	304	177	**1,934**
Group 4 - South/South West Hospital Group (Academic Partner: UCC)	263	185	240	163	160	222	178	235	188	229	137	**2,200**
Group 5 - Saolta West/North West Hospital Group (Academic Partner: NUIG)	226	170	175	150	148	144	86	107	174	186	195	**1,761**
Group 6 - UL Midwest Hospital Group (Academic Partner: UL)	109	81	90	76	77	74	87	60	59	110	121	**944**
Grand Total	**1,202**	**960**	**989**	**918**	**810**	**820**	**1,070**	**908**	**991**	**1,158**	**948**	**10,774**

Table 2: HSE Assaults within HSE Hospitals broken down by Category of Person with year incident occurred between 2008 – November 2018

Category of Person, Affected	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Grand Total
Allied Health Professional	28	18	17	14	16	16	25	20	18	13	15	**200**
Ambulance/Service User Transport	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	**3**
Catering/Housekeeping	11	11	19	14	13	5	18	7	15	18	14	**145**
Dental	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	**2**
Legacy Data (Volunteer)	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	**2**
Locum	5	1	3	10	5	15	16	3	1	0	0	**59**
Maintenance/Trades	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	**1**
Medical	28	21	25	26	26	22	33	30	27	28	25	**291**
Nursing	978	763	767	674	571	643	700	569	560	713	584	**7522**
Other Staff	152	146	158	180	178	116	272	271	369	377	304	**2523**
Professional Grades	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	**4**
Tech/Maintenance	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	4	0	9	5	**22**
Grand Total	**1,202**	**960**	**989**	**918**	**810**	**820**	**1,070**	**908**	**991**	**1,158**	**948**	**10,774**

Comment

The figures show that there is a level of annual fluctuation in the reported incidents, across all professions and hospital groups, however we would anticipate a rise in the number of recorded incidents as NIMS becomes further embedded in the system and the organisation continues to encourage the reporting of all incidents (regardless of the level of harm, if any).

Ensuring the safety of employees and service users is a priority concern for the HSE. The HSE is committed to creating a safe environment within which to work or to be treated.

There is an emphasis on training and equipping the workforce effectively with skills on risk identification and the management of violence and aggression.

Training in relation to the Management of Violence and Aggression is offered in all services.

The organisation will be placing a renewed emphasis on the management of work related aggression and violence in 2019 to support the organisational strategy and recently updated policy.

I trust this will answer your query however, please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely

Nicholas J Parkinson

Head of National Health and Safety Function