



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Phríomhoifigigh Airgeadais
Feidhmeannacht na
Seirbhíse Sláinte
Seomra 125, Ospidéal
Dr. Steevens
BÁC 8

Office of the Chief Financial Officer
Health Service Executive
Room 125, Dr Steevens
Hospital
Dublin 8

30th December 2019

Deputy Stephen S Donnelly TD,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Re PQ 52271 19: To ask the Minister for Health the amount the HSE spent on agency staff each month in 2018 and to date in 2019; the proportion of the anticipated agency staff expenditure by the HSE for 2019 incurred to date; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Donnelly,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. Your PQ above has been referred to me for response.

Please see Table 1 below which shows the total HSE Agency costs (Statutory and Voluntary) by month for the year 2018 and the equivalent figures for January to October 2019, being the most recent available data. The data was sourced from the HSE Management Data Report for December 2018 and for October 2019.

Table 1

| HSE Agency Costs by Month for 2018 and for the period January to October 2019 only HSE Statutory & Voluntary | | |
|---|----------------|-----------------------|
| | 2018 | * YTD Oct 2019 |
| Month | €000s | €000s |
| January | 32,304 | 35,657 |
| February | 30,639 | 33,370 |
| March | 30,565 | 34,255 |
| April | 31,879 | 33,351 |
| May | 34,250 | 35,884 |
| June | 31,161 | 34,731 |
| July | 34,024 | 37,221 |
| August | 36,389 | 36,519 |
| September | 33,913 | 33,934 |
| October | 34,953 | 36,075 |
| November | 36,666 | ** |
| December | 37,173 | ** |
| Agency Costs | 403,916 | 350,997 |

Source: HSE Management Data Reports
*Note: * Please note the 2019 data is draft, unaudited and is subject to change within the year end process. ** Not yet available*

HSE Agency costs for Statutory and Voluntary services for the period January to October 2019 is 6.85% over the full year planned allocation for agency staff expenditure in 2019. The HSE continuously monitors agency staff expenditure and a key focus is to reduce agency spend.

Agency expenditure should be considered in the overall context including increasing demand for services; the impact of earlier constraints on recruitment in the public service; on-going challenges in relation to the recruitment and retention of clinical staff; actions necessary to support compliance with the European Working Time Directive and efforts to reduce expenditure on agency staff.

Approximately 94% of our pay related spend each year is for directly employed staff and in certain cases, other than utilisation of agency, there are limited choices in terms of maintenance of essential services. In other circumstances, the flexibility, preferably as a short term measure (e.g. short term sick leave cover), offered by agency staffing makes it an appropriate choice.

The HSE is committed to minimizing the use of Agency staff but recruitment and retention of Clinical, Nursing and other key staff is a constant challenge and impacts adversely on our ability to maintain safe and effective services. Agency staffing is also used to allow for flexible services designed to meet specific Service User needs, variation in activity and as required where there is a short term critical service need. Agency expenditure is under constant review and where possible is replaced by HSE staff.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me at sarah.anderson1@hse.ie or tel: 045 882559.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Anderson

Sarah Anderson
General Manager Corporate Finance
National Finance Division, HSE
Email: sarah.anderson1@hse.ie
Tel: 045 882559