



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

15th February 2019

Deputy Clare Daly TD,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Re PQ 4536 19: *To ask the Minister for Health the number of agency nursing and midwifery staff employed in the health system; and the annual cost for agency nursing and midwifery staff in 2017 and 2018, respectively*

Dear Deputy Daly,

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 provides the total HSE Nursing & Midwifery Agency Staff costs for the years 2017 and 2018. Please note that the 2018 data is draft only and is subject to change within the year end audit process. The data was sourced from the HSE Consolidated Financial Intelligence system and is for HSE Statutory services only.

Table 1

HSE Nursing & Midwifery Agency Staff Costs for the years 2017 and 2018	2017	*2018
HSE Statutory Only	€m	€m
Nursing & Midwifery Agency Staff	64.3	76.9
Source: HSE Consolidated Financial Intelligence System (CFI)		
*Note: Please note 2018 figures are draft only and are subject to change within the year end audit process		

This expenditure should be considered in the overall context including increasing demand for services; the impact of earlier constraints on recruitment in the public service; ongoing 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.

Agency pay cost is under constant review. Agency staff are used where there is a difficulty in recruiting and employing hospital staff and where there is a short-term critical service need. Agency is also used for flexibility to allow for variation in activity and as required to meet patient demand needs.

I regret to inform you that the total number of agency nursing and midwifery staff employed in the health system is not maintained centrally and therefore is not available. However the number of agency nursing and midwifery staff employed through National Framework contracted agencies was 789.4 WTE's in 2017 and 894.2 WTE's in 2018. This data is only available for framework contracted agencies. There are also instances of some non framework agencies providing nurses off contract. These costs are included within Table 1 above however more detailed analysis of these costs including WTE's is not maintained centrally and therefore I regret to inform you that this information is not available.

Agency nurses are being used to fill long-term vacancies and 'lines' rather than for short-term, temporary vacancies, which was the original purpose of having agency frameworks in place. Together with Procurement a tendering process has just been completed for recruitment of International Nurses and the contracts are currently being issued to the successful Contractors. It is hoped that the recruitment of these international nurses, together with on-going local recruitment campaigns, will assist in reducing the number of vacancies and therefore subsequently reduce the overall agency spend.

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

Yours sincerely



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