



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

11th December 2019

Deputy Catherine Murphy TD,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Re PQ 49284 19: *To ask the Minister for Health the number of agency staff hired and or engaged by the HSE in the past five years to date; the cost per year of same; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

Dear Deputy Murphy,

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 HSE Agency Staff costs for the years 2014 to 2018. The data was sourced from the HSE Annual Financial Statements (AFS) and is for the HSE Statutory services only.

Table 1

HSE Agency Staff costs for the years 2014 to 2018	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
HSE Statutory services only	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m
Agency Staff	277.5	259.3	277.3	301.0	330.7

Source: HSE Annual Financial Statements (AFS)

I regret to inform you that the total number of agency staff employed in the health system is not maintained centrally and therefore is not available.

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

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