



05 August 2020

Deputy David Cullinane,  
Dáil Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2

**Ref:** PQ Ref 17876/20

*"To ask the Minister for Health his plans to fill the 500 vacant consultant posts; the timeline to achieve same; the estimated cost to fill 500 posts; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

Dear Deputy Cullinane

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. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

### Response

The data contained in Table 1 is extracted from DIME (Doctors Integrated Management E-system) as at 01 July 2020. DIME is dependent on clinical sites inputting details on their consultant workforce. Currently there is an estimated 99% compliance rate and therefore there may be variances and gaps in the data supplied to that held within clinical sites. As DIME is a live system it must be noted that there can be variances in the figures published dependent on the run date of the report as entries can be made with a retrospective date.

There are currently 273 consultant posts recorded on DIME as vacant, as verified by the clinical sites.

The following table, Table 1, provides the status on the number of Consultant Application Advisory Committee (CAAC) approved consultant posts as of 01 July 2020 detailed by specialty:

Table 1.	Filled	Unknown	Vacant	Total
Anaesthesiology including Intensive Care Medicine	402	3	20	425
Emergency Medicine	107	0	6	113
Medicine	729	5	72	806
Obstetrics & Gynaecology	166	0	14	180
Paediatrics	206	1	26	233
Pathology	260	0	39	299



Psychiatry	439	14	39	492
Radiology	287	0	27	314
Surgery	508	0	30	538
<b>Total</b>	<b>3104</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>3400</b>

There are 23 consultant posts where the status is currently unknown as the clinical site has not yet assigned a consultant to the post or verified if the post is vacant on DIME.

Once a consultant post is approved it may then be advertised by the relevant employer/Public Appointments Service (PAS). All posts would be in various stages of the recruitment process.

The Acute Hospitals Division, HSE, has advised that the average cost to employ a consultant is in the range of €220-€230k per annum per vacancy. It should be noted that the cost of a consultant varies depending on:

- the contract type (A, B, C etc)
- on-call rota arrangements
- PRSI costs also need to be considered
- A consultant will incur non-pay costs (consumables etc.) arising from their activity. These may be a multiple of the pay costs.
- Support costs of the consultant may also require additional costs – e.g. PA.

Yours sincerely

Eddie Staddon  
General Manager  
National Doctors Training and Planning