



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

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Louise O Reilly, T.D.

15th July 2020

PQ 11167/20: To ask the Minister for Health the amount spent on the Be on Call for Ireland campaign -

Dear Deputy,

I refer to your recent PQ which was forwarded to the HSE for reply.

This question has been raised by other Deputies and in order to ensure consistency please see the detailed response below which is a complete overview of the Be On Call for Ireland initiative.

Background to Be on Call for Ireland Initiative:

From mid February 2020 the HSE began to make preparations to increase significantly the capacity within the health services to manage the challenges presented by Covid.

From a staffing perspective this included a number of strategies including; exploiting all existing recruitment pools, maximising agency staff, rehiring of recently retired clinicians, increasing hours of part time staff, encouraging staff to return from career breaks and the postponement of annual leave.

Recruitment across the HSE is conducted through HBS Recruit, the Shared Service component of the HSE, together with appointments being made locally throughout the Hospital Groups and CHOs. Local recruitment equates to about 60% of recruitment activity

There was significant recruitment across the HSE during the period of Covid, with a total of 4,195 posts filled through HBS, with a further 890 candidates progressing through the clearance process. These staff will be in post over the next number of weeks. This recruitment includes a broad number of initiatives such as offering student nurses roles as Health Care Assistants and a significant increase of over 33% in the recruitment of Medical Interns. All of these appointments are on the HSE payroll.

Role of Be on Call for Ireland in recruiting additional healthcare staff:

A further project was developed to recruit additional healthcare staff. This was the 'Be on Call for Ireland' initiative which launched on St Patrick's Day. Given the anticipated increase in demand for hospital care and for community services predicted, and the pressure evident on health services in Spain and Italy at this time, the main priority of this project was to provide 'job ready' health care professionals to the health services.

The number of applications for the 'Be on Ireland on Call' initiative was approximately 73,000 with over 44,000 of those applications from administrative/support/volunteers. . The 15,000 volunteer applicants were redirected towards Volunteer Ireland.

When examining the remaining applicant pool of 29,000 it was essential that the HSE took a broad view of the health services, and did not in any way destabilise existing services by depleting other parts of the services i.e. private hospitals, voluntary organisation or private nursing homes.

Of this number it was established over 10,000 were already working in the health services. 1,000 were not registered with the relevant body and therefore were not licensed to work. A further 3,000 were undergraduates and over 1,000 withdrew. This left a residual number of approximately 14,500.

To this end the 'Be on Call for Ireland' initiative only targeted qualified health care workers who were not currently providing health services. Extensive online and telephone interviews took place to determine relevant candidates' availability to work, and to determine that candidates were suitably qualified or experienced.

The number of candidates who indicated they were available to work, and had the relevant experience needed by the services at that time, was approximately 2,000. The 'Be on Call' recruitment campaign particularly focused on these 2,000 candidates, in line with service needs in particular locations.

As of 10th July 2020, 194 doctors, nurses and health & social care professionals have been deployed from the 'Be on Call for Ireland' initiative to HSE services in both community, acute and public health departments. An additional 725 candidates have full recruitment clearances in place and are 'job ready', and can be deployed when and if needed. A further 908 candidates are in the clearance process. Candidates were appointed on short term employment contracts and contracts are renewed in line with service need

HSE/CPL Arrangement

Due to the immediate nature of the unprecedented emergency, coupled with the additional strain already being felt by the HSE recruitment services, it was necessary to engage outside agencies to assist in this work.

The 'Be on Call for Ireland' initiative was developed using existing HSE Procurement Frameworks. As CPL have an existing framework agreement for other recruitment services, and the requirement for this programme was immediate and therefore did not allow for a competitive tender applications process. This temporary contract was entered into in line with Regulation 2014/24/EU Article 32(C)

The CPL group were engaged to manage both the online platform build for this project and manage the subsequent recruitment process.

This included validating the professional registration, telephone interviews, screening processes, compliance processes such as Garda Vetting and Occupational Health assessments and finally issuing of an agency contract. CPL also manages the payroll and invoices the HSE for payment against a central cost centre.

Financial Arrangements

The HSE was preparing for a level of crisis similar to that of mainland Europe and therefore it was anticipated that the numbers required would have been substantial and immediate. As the

number of applicants exceeded 70,000 this required a large cohort of recruitment personnel to manage same in a timely manner. The initial team consisted of 40.

The financial model with CPL was divided into 5 cohorts:

- **Recruitment Teams**

In line with the requirements and standards of HSE recruitment, staff within CPL communicated with and processing applicants. From the start of the programme this equated to 40 recruiters per week from mid-March until the end of May which was subsequently reduced to 30 recruiters per week for the month of June and as of 1st July is being reduced to 2 recruiters.

The cost per recruiter per week is €1,038.75* per week

- **Clinical Governance (Nursing)**

These were specialised nursing resources to ensure that all nursing appointments met the clinical standards of the HSE. This was in place for 6 weeks as most nursing applicants were processed in that time.

Total Cost - €7,500*

- **Digital Developments**

This programme required a number of digital developments to capture and provide ongoing filtering and management of different applicant cohorts.

Total Cost - €72,612.00* (digital build & support March-May)

- **Occupational Health Clearances**

All applicants who were made 'job ready' received a separate Occupational Health clearance in line with HSE standards.

Cost - €95.00* per person

- **Payroll costs**

The payroll costs for the appointments are managed through CPL which includes a basic payroll cost in line with Department of Health salary scales together with an agency margin of 10%.

* costs above are exclusive of VAT

Summary

This programme can be reactivated in the event of a surge later in the year. Currently there are 724 candidates who are 'job ready' and remain available to services. This programme remains flexible to meet the needs of the Health Services

Yours sincerely



HSE National HR