



8th April 2021

Deputy David Cullinane
Dáil Éireann
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

PQ 15847/21 To ask the Minister for Health the number of whole-time equivalent funded, filled and vacant positions in testing and tracing; the basis on which they are filled as a percentage of full-time; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Cullinane,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question which has been referred by the Minister for Health to the Health Service Executive for direct response.

The HSE developed an Operating Model for the National Testing and Tracing function during the summer of 2020. A key component of this was to recruit a dedicated workforce for testing and contact tracing. We have not been imposed a staffing budget, it was selected based on international standards for our population, testing approach and our volume targets. We have the flexibility to increase it if needed.

For ease of reference I have broken down below our update with regards the current and intended recruitment figures for whole-time equivalent positions by Contact Tracers and Community Swabbers

Contact Tracers - Contact Management Programme

As of 5 April 2021 there is a total of 769 WTE (over 850 individuals) positions filled in the HSE Contact Management Programme (CMP). We currently have a budget of 800 WTE positions within the CMP so we stand at 92% of our intended target. The staffing number fluctuates within the range of our budget. While we continue to monitor and review our recruitment requirements, the current headcount is sufficient for the metrics and standing capacity volumes set for the CMP.

Community Swabbers

As of 5 April 2021 there is a total of 711 WTE (over 780 individuals) working as Community Swabbers. We have a budget of 800 WTE positions in Community Swabbing. This therefore reflects 85% of our intended target. We are again comfortable we can meet all metrics and standing capacity volumes with this workforce but will keep the number of staff required under constant review. In January with this workforce we exceeded volume targets on numerous occasions. In addition to community swabbers we have 12 NAS pop up teams.

I trust this addresses your questions.

Yours sincerely,

Niamh O'Beirne
National Lead Testing and Tracing

