



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

11<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Deputy David Cullinane TD,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

**Re PQ 19425 22:** *To ask the Minister for Health the total amount spent on locum consultant posts in the health service for each year from 2016 to date, in tabular form; the number of posts to which payments related to in each year; 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. Your PQ above has been referred to me for response.

Please see **Appendix 1 Table 1** below which provides HSE Agency spend for the Medical/Dental Staff Category for the years 2016 to 2021. Please note that the 2021 data is draft only until completion of the year end audit process. The data was sourced from the HSE Consolidated Financial Information system (CFI) and is for HSE Statutory services only. This is the best information currently available.

The Finance systems capture agency costs under the Dept. of Health staff categories. Agency costs for Consultants and NCHD's are included in the Medical/Dental staff category but are not separately identifiable. Furthermore the number of locum consultant posts is not centrally captured and is therefore not available.

The shortcomings in the HSE legacy financial systems are well acknowledged and their replacement by a single standard financial system for the Health Sector is at the core of the Finance Reform programme initiated by the Department of Health.

Agency expenditure is under constant review and the reduction and control of agency costs continues to be a particular focus for the Health Service. The effective management of variable pay costs forms a major element of operational cost-containment plans and is subject to continuous review at the performance meetings held under the performance and accountability framework. However, it is important to note that in addition to the specific critical response to the COVID-19 pandemic there are a variety of reasons driving agency demand. Recruitment and retention of Clinical staff is a constant challenge and impacts adversely on the ability to maintain safe and effective services. The balance between high cost and high risk to service quality and safety is struck through agency and overtime use to provide/maintain necessary services. Agency staffing is also used for the replacement of short term illness and maternity leave and allows 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.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me at [sarah.anderson1@hse.ie](mailto:sarah.anderson1@hse.ie) or tel: 087 9423319.

Yours sincerely

*Sarah Anderson*

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## Appendix 1 to PQ 19425 22

**Table 1**

<b>HSE Medical/Dental Agency staff costs for the years 2016 to 2021</b>						
<i>HSE Statutory Services Only</i>						
<b>Staff Category</b>	<b>2016 €'000</b>	<b>2017 €'000</b>	<b>2018 €'000</b>	<b>2019 €'000</b>	<b>2020 €'000</b>	<b>2021 *</b> €'000
Medical/Dental	106,312	105,525	93,881	95,236	94,655	96,397
<i>Source : HSE Consolidated Financial Intelligence System (CFI)</i>						
<i>* Data for 2021 is draft until completion of the annual audit.</i>						