



22nd July 2022

Deputy Róisín Shortall
Dáil Éireann,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2

Issued via email to:

PQ Number: 38201/22: To ask the Minister for Health the number of staff who are employed in the Contact Management Programme since it was established, by year, role and location, in tabular form; and the number of vacancies currently in the programme by role.

Dear Deputy Shortall,

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

We are unable to fully breakdown the location of staff and their roles for the period prior to September 2021 as our data was not captured in that manner however a snapshot of the Contact Management Programme (CMP) staff as of 8th January 2021 is outlined below:

08 January 2021	WTE
Dedicated Contact Tracing Workforce	718
Redeployed Contact Tracing Workforce	43
Grade Vs and above	52
Total Headcount	813

From September 2021, a monthly census details comprehensively on the breakdown of staff by roles, grades and locations and in this regard there are two spreadsheets attached containing snapshots as at 30th September 2021 and the current standing for July 2022 of the total number of staff. The table below reflects totals for the 3 time periods reported;

08 January 2021	813 (see above table)
30 September 2021	840.13 (1 st spreadsheet breakdown attached)
1st July 2022	148.93 (2 nd spreadsheet breakdown attached)

Vacancies

As at 18th July, the CMP have 54 vacancies which are at interview/recruitment stage:

Role	Number of Vacancies
Grade VIII	1
Grade VII	4
Grade V	1
Grade IV	3
Grade III	45
Total	54



Throughout the pandemic our Contact management programme (CMP) have quickly informed patients of their COVID-19 test result, and in the case of a positive diagnosis provided advice and guidance to them about what they need to do, and promptly traced relevant close contacts in line with Public Health guidance in order to reduce the transmission of the disease.

At our peak we had a workforce of over 800 staff, which was necessary when case levels were high and Public Health advice required widespread contact tracing. During our tenure we have leveraged technology to support many of our contact tracing processes.

Changes to Public Health advice in relation to testing for COVID-19 were approved by Government and came into effect on Monday 28th February 2022. Prior to this date, testing and tracing delivered a service for extensive case finding and tracing of infection to reduce COVID-19 transmission. The current advice is that testing and tracing is primarily focused on mitigation of the severe impacts of COVID-19 for those most vulnerable to the disease and those with risk factors for the disease who may benefit from specific interventions.

Contact tracing is being used to trace and intervene in pathways of transmission in individuals and settings where there is a risk of progression to serious disease and in line with our transition from mass testing, two of our locations closed on 30th June 2022 reflecting the changes to our headcount with effect from July 2022.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Eileen Whelan'.

Eileen Whelan
National Lead Test & Trace and Vaccination Programme