



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

24th June 2022

Deputy Sorca Clarke TD,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Re PQ 27775 22: *To ask the Minister for Health the number of workers in his Department and in each office or agency under the aegis of his Department that are not employed directly but are employed by a private company.*

Dear Deputy Clarke,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Questions, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. Your PQ above has been referred to me for response.

Overall HSE agency WTE figures are not centrally recorded and therefore the information you have requested is not available.

The HSE Finance systems capture agency spend by staff category. Please see **Appendix 1 Table 1** below which shows the total HSE spend on agency staff for HSE Statutory services only for the years 2019 to 2021. The breakdown provided is by the Department of Health staff categories i.e. Medical/Dental, Nursing, Management/Admin, Paramedical, Support Services and Maintenance/Technical staff. The data provided was sourced from the HSE Consolidated Financial Intelligence system and is for HSE Statutory services only. Please note in view of the fact that there are still currently numerous ledger systems in operation in the HSE some differences in coding may arise.

In 2020 and 2021 the HSE sourced additional agency staff primarily to support the expansion of the workforce in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and also to support service delivery and COVID-19 response due to increased staff absence due to COVID-19. 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. Agency contracts were put in place for Contact Tracing staff within the HSE National Contact Management Programme. The HSE Live service provided the COVID-19 helpline throughout the pandemic. In addition agency teams were engaged within the Vaccination programme and the Test and Trace programme. These staff augmented HSE staff supporting all aspects of both programmes including to commission and support the roll out of the technology for new centres, supporting all the vaccine staff and Test and Trace. These initiatives, among others, related to the HSE's response to the COVID-19 emergency have directly impacted on agency costs incurred in 2020 and 2021 particularly in the Management/Administration staffing category.

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, Nursing and other key 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 or tel: 087 9423319.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Anderson

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Appendix 1 to PQ 27775 22

Table 1

<i>HSE Agency staff costs by staff category for the years 2019, 2020 and 2021</i>			
<i>HSE Statutory Services Only</i>			
Staff Category	2019	2020	2021
	€'000	€'000	€'000
Medical/Dental	95,236	94,653	96,392
Nursing	80,252	88,350	123,217
Management/Administration	29,583	44,047	108,936
Paramedical	27,748	34,453	60,379
Support Services	115,774	127,918	178,807
Maintenance/Technical	434	635	658
Total	349,027	390,057	568,389

Source : HSE Consolidated Financial Intelligence System (CFI)

Note : Please note in view of the fact that there are still currently numerous ledger systems in operation in the HSE some differences in coding may arise.