



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

28th September 2022

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

Re PQ 44472 22: *To ask the Minister for Health the amount that has been spent on medical agency staffing in 2019, 2021 and to date in 2022.*

Dear Deputy Cullinane,

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.

Please see **Appendix 1 Table 1** below which shows the total HSE spend on Medical agency staff for HSE Statutory services only for the years 2019 to 2021 and for the period January to July 2022 which is the most recent data currently available. The breakdown provided is by the Department of Health Medical staff categories only i.e. Medical/Dental, Nursing and Paramedical. The data provided was sourced from the HSE Consolidated Financial Intelligence system and is for HSE Statutory services only. Please also 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 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

Sarah Anderson
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Appendix 1 to PQ 44472 22**Table 1**

HSE Medical Agency staff costs by staff category for the years 2019 to 2021 and for the period January to July 2022				
<i>HSE Statutory Services Only</i>				
Medical Agency Staff Category	2019 €'000	2020 €'000	2021 €'000	Ytd July 2022 €'000
Medical/Dental	95,236	94,653	96,392	64,730
Nursing	80,252	88,350	123,217	73,138
Paramedical	27,748	34,453	60,379	26,669
Total	203,236	217,456	279,988	164,537
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.				