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20th April 2023

Deputy Denis Naughten,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 17623/23 -To ask the Minister for Health the number of vacant optometry and ophthalmology roles in primary care services by CHO area; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Naughten,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for response.

There is no accepted definition of what a vacancy actually is. Data in relation to vacancies that are approved for replacement include New Development posts, retirements and resignations. However there can be other reasons posts are not filled (for example where there is long term sick leave, maternity leave, blocks of parental leave etc.), which may not be possible to gain budgetary approval to replace, although there may be a person assigned to such 'vacancies'/posts that are crucial to service delivery. However they are not an approved vacancy.

Because of the complexity of it, it is not possible to hold accurate data at a national level or give a definitive figure for vacancies as this information is not routinely collected in the manner sought.

All our employment data is available on the HSE Personnel Census website [here](#) .

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

Jacqueline Nix

Assistant National Director, HR Community Operations