



**Oifig an Phríomhoifigigh Airgeadais**  
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2<sup>nd</sup> August 2023

Deputy Duncan Smith TD,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

**Re PQ 37083 23:** *To ask the Minister for Health the amount spent on agency staff in 2022 and to date in 2023 across the health service, broken down by staffing type and to whom the payments were made; if he will provide a breakdown for the amount spent on nursing agency staff in 2022 and to date in 2023; his plans to address this; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

Dear Deputy Smith,

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 shows the total HSE spend on agency staff for HSE Statutory services only for the full year 2022 and for the period January to June 2022 which is the most recent data currently available. 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 that the 2023 data is draft only and is subject to change within the year end audit process.

The available supply in the labour market for health workforce continues to be a challenge. This is not unique to Ireland, but rather a global health workforce challenge. 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. Therefore, as part of the HSE's overarching resourcing approach whereby direct employment does not meet the needs of service delivery requirements, agency staff are utilised. This can be for a variety of reasons, including sick absence replacement both long and short term, to replace vacancies currently being actively recruited to, to replace maternity leave etc. More recently, subsequent to the government announcement to reverse the Haddington Road Agreement, this has placed additional resourcing requirements, with the replacement of lost hours in critical services areas, a priority. In advance of the filling of these hours via direct employees, there is a need to prioritise critical services for replacement through agency and overtime. Collectively, these give rise to the utilisation of agency resources however while simultaneously running large scale domestic and international recruitment campaigns to fill through direct employment.

In a number of instances in recent times the HSE have been unable to fill a vacancy even via agency. The agencies have indicated that they are experiencing difficulty in recruiting themselves due to a lack of availability and also accommodation costs.



The majority of agency spend is salary and statutory pay costs such as PRSI, holiday allowance etc. In line with the Protection of Employees (Part -Time Work) Act agency staff have the right to the same basic employment conditions, this includes basic pay, shift premiums, unsocial hours and Sunday rates.

In relation to your request for a list of payments by Vendor please see **Appendix 2 Table 2 (separate file attached)** which shows the total HSE Agency Staff payments by Vendor for HSE Statutory services only for the period January to September 2022 which is the most recent readily available data by Vendor for the period requested. The data provided was sourced from the HSE Regional Finance ledger systems and is for HSE Statutory services only. This is the best information currently 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.

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sarah Anderson".

Sarah Anderson  
General Manager HSE Corporate Finance  
HSE National Finance Division  
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Tel: 087 9423319



**Appendix 1 to PQ 37083 23**

**Table 1**

<b>HSE Agency Staff Costs by HSE Staff Category for 2022 and for the period January to June 2023</b>		
<i>HSE Statutory Services Only</i>		
<b>Staff Category</b>	<b>2022 €'000s</b>	<b>*YTD Jun 2023 €'000</b>
Medical/Dental	119,050	67,351
Nursing	144,017	69,478
Management/Administration	100,778	42,711
Paramedical	44,636	20,361
Support Services	210,137	116,426
Maintenance/Technical	1,175	822
<b>Total</b>	<b>619,794</b>	<b>317,150</b>
<i>Source: HSE Consolidated Financial Intelligence System (CFI)</i>		
<i>*Note: 2023 figures are draft only and are subject to change within the year end audit process</i>		