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Deputy Kathleen Funchion, TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

RE: PQ 38143/23

To ask the Minister for Health the number of stroke units, by location, that are operating below the recommended nurse or staffing levels; and the estimated cost of putting the recommended staff levels in place.

Dear Deputy Funchion,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in relation to the above parliamentary question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have consulted with the National Clinical Programme (NCP) for Stroke on your question and have been informed that the following outlines the position.

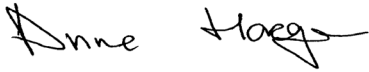
A recently published Irish National Audit of Stroke (INAS) Organisational Audit Report (2021)¹ describes the organisation of acute hospital stroke services, based on a self-reported questionnaire submitted by all hospitals providing acute stroke services in Ireland in September 2021.

Findings of this 2021 report show that, out of the 24 stroke units across the country, 21 (88%) of these stroke units operate below the recommended nurse staffing level (as recommended by the European Stroke Organisation). The National Clinical Programme for Stroke, in conjunction with the Framework for Safe Nurse Staffing and Skill Mix, is currently undertaking an exercise to understand the current nurse staffing levels on stroke units, to examine what tool can best delineate the nurse to patient ratio for such complex care. This exercise is now at the final stages of data analysis which will inform the recommendations of nurse staffing levels on stroke units. Nurse staff costings reflective of current stroke care can then be completed.

This 2021 INAS organisational audit also indicated insufficient health and social care profession (HSCP) staffing in all 24 identified stroke units nationally. While total staffing varied, all units were deficient in some aspect of specialist therapy care. The cost to address HSCP staffing (Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Dietetics, Medical Social Work and Psychology) in acute stroke units (using July 2022 pay figures) has been calculated at a cost of circa €12.8million over five years. The HSE's National Stroke Strategy 2022-2027² outlines a five-year phased programme to address these staffing deficits.

I trust this information is of assistance to you, but should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Anne Horgan
General Manager

References

1. [Irish National Audit of Stroke Organisational Audit Report 2021 FINAL.pdf](#)
2. [National Stroke Strategy 2022-2027 \(hse.ie\)](#)