

David Cullinane, T.D.

23<sup>rd</sup> April 2024

**PQ 15424/24:** *To ask the Minister for Health the number of assaults recorded against staff at HSE facilities for each quarter for each year 2019-2024, inclusive, in tabular form. -David Cullinane*

Dear Deputy.

### **Background**

With regard to the above request for information, please see below the report on assaults on HSE staff. To assist with understanding the report/data more fully, I feel it appropriate to firstly give a brief background to the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and to the data in the report. In 2015 the NIMS system was introduced by the SCA. This requires all incidents to be reported through a national centralised system and will ultimately improve the quality of the data. However, the HSE has long been proactive in encouraging staff to report all incidents and this is enshrined in the Corporate Safety Statement, Violence and Aggression policy and Incident Management Framework and Guidance.

Please note that the following conditions apply to the data:

- All physical, verbal and sexual assaults on staff that have been reported on NIMS are included
- Assaults include a problem/cause of: physical, verbal or sexual assault on staff in the HSE that occurred from 01/01/2019 – 31/03/2024.
- The report was run by “Date of Incident”, which is the date on which the incident occurred
- An incident can be a harmful Incident (Adverse Event), no harm incident, near miss, dangerous occurrence (reportable circumstance) or complaint.
- Values between 1-5 have been redacted and are denoted by ~
- This report is correct as of 08/04/2024.
- Excludes: Voluntary Organisations (FOI & PQ requests for voluntary organisations need to be sent directly to these statutory bodies).

When considering the figures in the report it should be noted that staff are encouraged to report all “near misses” and incidents – even those that **do not** result in harm. Hence, the number of incidents reports should not be considered as indicative of a level of harm. There may also be multiple reports relating to the same incident.

**Table 1. Incidents by severity rating in each quarter from 01/01/2019 – 31/03/2024.**

Severity Rating	2019				2020				2021				2022				2023				2024	Grand Total	
	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Qtr1		
Major		~		~	~	~			~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	26
Moderate	52	62	55	65	57	55	62	31	38	41	44	34	38	39	58	30	63	59	29	49	58		1019
Minor	152	151	144	171	162	130	116	96	90	97	120	111	118	114	122	113	128	146	124	126	112		2643
Negligible	1367	1620	1550	1485	1338	1203	1221	1040	1030	1099	1060	1098	1149	1224	1314	1102	1292	1467	1366	1375	1038		26438
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1571</b>	<b>1835</b>	<b>1749</b>	<b>1722</b>	<b>1558</b>	<b>1389</b>	<b>1399</b>	<b>1167</b>	<b>1159</b>	<b>1240</b>	<b>1225</b>	<b>1246</b>	<b>1309</b>	<b>1379</b>	<b>1495</b>	<b>1246</b>	<b>1484</b>	<b>1672</b>	<b>1520</b>	<b>1553</b>	<b>1208</b>		<b>30126</b>

**Table 2. Incidents by category of person, affected in each quarter from 01/01/2019 – 31/03/2024.**

Category of Person, Affected	2019				2020				2021				2022				2023				2024	Grand Total	
	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Qtr1		
								~				~											~
Allied Health Professional	25	38	39	27	39	27	38	17	23	26	25	47	50	66	97	71	88	77	83	98	64		1065
Ambulance/Service User Transport	6	~	7	7	12	14	14		10	~	8	10	7	7	10	~	13	17	13	13	8		191
Catering/Housekeeping	15	25	15	~	12	19	16	15	7	14	15	9	11	9	6	14	6	15	16	25	14		283
Dental	~	~	~	~		~			~				~		~	~	~	~	~	~	~		27
Locum				~									~				~						~
Maintenance/Trades	~	~			~		~		~		~		~		~		~		~	~	~		20
Medical	16	26	20	29	22	23	17	14	8	13	20	30	19	14	23	26	18	24	32	30	12		436
Non Professional Volunteer		~		~																			~
Nursing	962	1109	1032	1068	951	840	813	687	736	773	732	681	773	859	956	766	916	935	869	912	733		18103
Other Staff	537	618	632	580	500	458	494	432	369	404	419	462	426	414	398	345	430	591	497	467	367		9840
Professional Grades	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~		43
Professional Volunteer													~							~	~		~
Tech/Maintenance	~	~	~		18	~	~	~	~	~	~	6	~	16	8	~	17	8	8		~		105
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1571</b>	<b>1835</b>	<b>1749</b>	<b>1722</b>	<b>1558</b>	<b>1389</b>	<b>1399</b>	<b>1167</b>	<b>1159</b>	<b>1240</b>	<b>1225</b>	<b>1246</b>	<b>1309</b>	<b>1379</b>	<b>1495</b>	<b>1246</b>	<b>1484</b>	<b>1672</b>	<b>1520</b>	<b>1553</b>	<b>1208</b>		<b>30126</b>

\*Please note that this NIMS data may contain anomalies and is subject to further change following ongoing data analysis.



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#### Severity Ratings:

**Negligible** is defined as adverse event leading to minor injury not requiring first aid. No impaired psychosocial functioning.

**Minor** is defined as minor injury or illness, first aid treatment required < 3 days extended hospital stay Impaired psychosocial functioning greater than 3 days less than one month.

**Moderate** is defined as significant injury requiring medical treatment e.g. Fracture and/or counselling. Agency reportable, e.g. HSA, Gardaí (violent and aggressive acts). >3 Days absence 3-8 days extended hospital stay. Impaired psychosocial functioning greater than one month and less than six months.

**Major** is defined as major injuries/long term incapacity or disability (loss of limb) requiring medical treatment and/or counselling Impaired psychosocial functioning greater than six months.

**Extreme** is defined as an incident leading to death or major permanent incapacity. Event which impacts on large number of service users or member of the public Permanent psychosocial functioning incapacity.

#### Comment

Due to delays in reporting numbers are likely to change overtime, however the organisation continues to encourage the reporting of all incidents (regardless of the level of harm, if any).

Ensuring the safety of employees and service users is a priority concern for the HSE. The HSE is committed to creating a safe environment within which to work or to be treated.

The organisation will continue to place an emphasis on the management of work related aggression and violence to support the Organisation's strategy and policy. Key focus areas are:

- National policy on the management of work related aggression and violence (policy review)
- Risk Assessment
- Training

I trust this will answer your request

Yours sincerely

**Marie O'Sullivan**  
National HR