



Oifig anStiúrthóir
An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta,

Foirgneamh Aibhneacha, Crosbhóthar
Thamhlachta, Tamhlacht,
Baile Átha Cliath D24 XNP2

Office of the Director
National Ambulance Service

Rivers Building, Tallaght Cross
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Ref: RM/PQ/15510-13/9/24/04/23

23 April 2024

Deputy David Cullinane TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ15510/24 - To ask the Minister for Health the number of staff at the National Ambulance Service who have received premia payments who did not meet eligibility criteria further to a Labour Court Determination (details supplied) in each of the years 2019-2024, by payment type, by staff grade, in tabular form; the total value of overpayments; the highest value overpaid to any one individual; the number of staff in receipt of overpayments in bands of €1,000; the number of ineligible staff in receipt of such payments for three or more years and five or more years; and the value of overpayments over the past 15 years. — David Cullinane.

PQ15511/24 – To ask the Minister for Health the number of National Ambulance Service staff who were absent due to long-term sick leave or suspension during the period 2019-2024 who were still in receipt of payment as per their roster; the number of staff in receipt of such payments for three or more years and five or more years; and the value of overpayments over the past 15 years. — David Cullinane.

PQ15512/24 – To ask the Minister for Health the number of times shift allowance was authorised for staff in the National Ambulance Service who were redeployed during the pandemic; and if these payments were sanctioned by national financial regulations or other senior officials in the HSE. — David Cullinane

PQ15513/24 - To ask the Minister for Health if, in relation to a Labour Court Determination (details supplied), all National Ambulance Service staff who received payments for which they were inevitable have been informed of these overpayments; if the NAS has begun the process of recuperating overpayments or otherwise addressing incorrect payments; if the payment of such premia payments to ineligible staff has ceased; if so, the date on which it ceased; if not, if a date has been set for the cessation of such payments; the accountable officer for this matter; and if he will make a statement on the matter. — David Cullinane.

Dear Deputy Cullinane,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) National Ambulance Service (NAS) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above parliamentary questions which you submitted to the Minister for response.

PQ15510/24

An individual staff member challenged the HSE's interpretation of Section 6.x of the National Ambulance Agreement 1978 and having exhausted the internal Grievance Procedure, the matter was referred to the WRC (Decision ADJ-00042638).





The staff member appealed Decision ADJ-00042638 to the Labour Court whom subsequently confirmed and clarified, through Determination PWD2344 (Appeal of Adjudication Officer (CA-00053180-001)), that the provisions of Labour Court Determination No. 7001 should apply to the application and interpretation of Section 6.x of the National Ambulance Agreement 1978.

The operative date of this decision is the 5 December 2023 and consequently, NAS has no basis to consider the payment of shift allowance before that date as an overpayment. This outcome now has prospective and collective implications in relation to the eligibility criteria for the payment of premia payments relating to shift work and the design of staff rosters.

In this regard, and as a first step, line managers have been directed to undertake an audit to determine how many staff members may be in receipt of such premia payments but whom may not meet the eligibility criteria for that payment based on the criteria effective from the 5 December 2024.

The first round of the audit is now complete and a second phase has commenced to examine in detail, the current roster patterns of approx. 3% of staff. The results of that audit will inform next steps which may include:

- Termination of secondments and return to previous 24/7 rostered roles
- Payment of Unsocial Hours Allowance where the individual works unsocial hours but does not meet the criteria for Shift Allowance
- Subject to service need, change rosters to incorporate days, nights and weekends into the shift pattern

PQ15511/24

In the period 2019 – 2024, an average of 36 staff were on long term sick leave (including Injury at Work, Critical Illness Protocol) or Administrative Leave. An average of 50% of such staff have exhausted all benefit schemes and are on unpaid leave. Of those remaining, an average of 14 continued to be in Shift Allowance, depending on the duration of absence, their individual circumstances or the prevailing practices in the local payroll centres.

6 staff were on long term leave for over 3 years and 3 staff were on long term leave for over 5 years. One of these staff has been dismissed while several others are the subject of litigation and hence, no further information can be provided.

Due to the administrative burden associated with this request, the impact of the Recruitment Pause on Clerical/Administrative staffing and ongoing litigation, we are unable to provide a more detailed response.

PQ15512/24

During the pandemic, an average of 30 to 70 staff were re-deployed at any one time. Staff whom were entitled to received Shift Allowance continued to receive such payment while those whom were not (an average of 30) did not receive such payment.

Due to the administrative burden associated with this request, and the impact of the Recruitment Pause on Clerical/Administrative staffing, we are unable to provide a more detailed response.





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PQ15513/24

As the second phase of the audit is ongoing, it is yet to be established how many staff may be ineligible. Where any overpayment is identified since the 5 December 2023, then any such overpayment would be addressed in line with the provisions of National Financial Regulation NFR-B03 <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/finance/nfr/nfrb3.pdf> . The Director of the National Ambulance Service is the Accountable Officer for this matter.

I hope this information is helpful.

Robert Morton
Director
National Ambulance Service

