

29th February 2024

PQ 7572/24, PQ 7296/24

Dear Mr Cullinane,

I refer to your PQ 7572/24 and PQ 7296/24 request which was forwarded to the HSE for response.

PQ 7572/24: *To ask the Minister for Health the number of assaults recorded against staff at HSE facilities for January for each year 2019-2024, inclusive, in tabular form. -David Cullinane*

PQ 7296/24: *To ask the Minister for Health the number of assaults recorded against staff at HSE facilities for each quarter for each year 2019-2023, inclusive, in tabular form. -David Cullinane*

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 in January for each year 2019-2024, inclusive and in each quarter for each year 2019-2023, inclusive.
- 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 15/02/2024.
- Excludes: Voluntary Organisations

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 January for each year 2019 – 2024, inclusive.

| Severity Rating | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | Grand Total |
|--------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| | Jan | Jan | Jan | Jan | Jan | Jan | |
| Major | | ~ | ~ | ~ | | | ~ |
| Moderate | 20 | 18 | 10 | 6 | 15 | 9 | 78 |
| Minor | 43 | 59 | 18 | 33 | 36 | 34 | 223 |
| Negligible | 464 | 471 | 319 | 380 | 387 | 275 | 2296 |
| Grand Total | 527 | 549 | 348 | 421 | 438 | 318 | 2601 |

Table 2. Incidents by severity rating in each quarter for each year 2019 – 2023, inclusive.

| Severity Rating | 2019 | | | | 2020 | | | | 2021 | | | | 2022 | | | | 2023 | | | | Grand Total |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| | Qtr1 | Qtr2 | Qtr3 | Qtr4 | Qtr1 | Qtr2 | Qtr3 | Qtr4 | Qtr1 | Qtr2 | Qtr3 | Qtr4 | Qtr1 | Qtr2 | Qtr3 | Qtr4 | Qtr1 | Qtr2 | Qtr3 | Qtr4 | |
| Major | | ~ | | ~ | ~ | ~ | | | ~ | ~ | ~ | ~ | ~ | ~ | ~ | | ~ | | ~ | ~ | 23 |
| Moderate | 52 | 62 | 55 | 65 | 57 | 55 | 62 | 31 | 38 | 41 | 44 | 34 | 38 | 39 | 58 | 30 | 63 | 59 | 29 | 47 | 959 |
| Minor | 152 | 151 | 144 | 171 | 162 | 130 | 116 | 96 | 90 | 97 | 120 | 111 | 118 | 114 | 122 | 113 | 127 | 145 | 124 | 123 | 2526 |
| Negligible | 1367 | 1620 | 1550 | 1485 | 1338 | 1203 | 1221 | 1040 | 1030 | 1099 | 1060 | 1098 | 1148 | 1224 | 1314 | 1102 | 1289 | 1464 | 1359 | 1318 | 25329 |
| Grand Total | 1571 | 1835 | 1749 | 1722 | 1558 | 1389 | 1399 | 1167 | 1159 | 1240 | 1225 | 1246 | 1307 | 1379 | 1495 | 1245 | 1480 | 1668 | 1513 | 1490 | 28837 |

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

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, however please do not hesitate to contact us should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely



Katrina Dempsey

Head of the National Health and Safety Function

