

8th April 2025

Deputy Ivana Bacik TD.,
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2
E: ivana.bacik@oireachtas.ie

Re: PQ 15132/25: To ask the Minister for Health if she has heard reports of a high prevalence of zero hour contracts being used for healthcare assistants at St. Vincent's Hospital Dublin; the number of such persons on such contracts in March 2025, and on the same date in each of the preceding five years; her plans to phase out the use of such contracts across the health service; if she will report on her engagement with the HSE in respect of the use of such contracts; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Bacik

I refer to the above parliamentary question which was sent to me for direct response.

I have had this matter examined and am advised that SVUH engages Healthcare Assistants (HCA) on 'if and when required' contracts on the HCA Bank to cover unplanned staffing deficiencies. These Staff Bank arrangements are common across Hospitals and in place for some time to reduce reliance on agency staff. The Hospital offers any vacant shifts which arise and the employee is not obliged to accept any offer of a shift. Please note that these are not 'Zero Hour' contacts as there is no requirement for the employee to be available for a certain number of hours per week. The number of shifts offered through the HCA Bank is based on the exigencies of the service and can therefore vary, depending on various circumstances.

The table below outlines number of staff per year:

March 2025	13
March 2024	17
March 2023	18
March 2022	19
March 2021	21

Yours sincerely

Cahal Flynn,
Director of Operations.