

31st January 2025

Mr. David Cullinane
PQ 3488/25 and PQ3490/25

Dear Mr Cullinane

I refer to your request for information detailed below;

PQ 3488/25 (Health): *To ask the Minister for Health the number of assaults recorded against staff at HSE facilities for each quarter for each of the years 2019 to 2024, in tabular form.*

PQ 3490/25 (Health): *To ask the Minister for Health the number of assaults recorded against staff at HSE facilities for each January and December for each of the years 2019 to 2025, in tabular form.*

Background

With regard to the above request for information, please see below the report on Assaults on staff across all health facilities.

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 between 01/01/2019 and 31/01/2025.
- 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 31/01/2025.
- 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 incident 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 for each Quarter from 01/01/2019 – 31/12/2024

	2019				2020				2021				2022				2023				2024				Grand Total
Severity Rating	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	
Major		~		~	~	~			~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	41
Minor	152	152	144	170	162	130	116	97	92	97	120	112	119	117	123	113	128	152	125	126	148	118	125	120	3058
Moderate	52	61	55	66	57	56	62	31	38	41	44	34	38	42	57	30	64	56	29	51	59	62	65	42	1192
Negligible	1367	1620	1553	1487	1338	1207	1224	1049	1040	1099	1062	1101	1155	1226	1321	1107	1300	1474	1382	1401	1335	1355	1305	1155	30663
Grand Total	1571	1836	1752	1725	1558	1394	1402	1177	1171	1240	1227	1250	1316	1388	1505	1251	1494	1683	1538	1582	1545	1537	1495	1317	34954

The majority of reported incidents were negligible, accounting for 87.72%. Moderate incidents were 3.41%, minor incidents were 8.75%, and major incidents constituted 0.12%. There were no reported extreme incidents.

Table 2. Incidents by Severity Rating for each January and December from 01/01/2019 – 31/01/2025

	2019 Jan	2019 Dec	2020 Jan	2020 Dec	2021 Jan	2021 Dec	2022 Jan	2022 Dec	2023 Jan	2023 Dec	2024 Jan	2024 Dec	2025 Jan	Grand Total
Severity Rating														
Major			~		~	~	~			~				6
Minor	43	59	59	26	18	34	33	39	36	34	44	45	16	486
Moderate	20	21	18	8	10	15	6	7	16	19	14	11	9	174
Negligible	464	408	471	317	320	380	380	341	389	452	429	352	171	4874
Grand Total	527	488	549	351	349	430	421	387	441	506	487	408	196	5540

The majority of reported incidents were negligible, accounting for 87.98%. Moderate incidents were 3.14%, minor incidents were 8.77%, and major incidents constituted 0.11%. There were no reported extreme incidents.

*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