

Mr. Liam Quaide

17th June 2025

PQ 33390/25: To ask the Minister for Health the number of reported assaults on HSE staff during the course of their work duties for the years 2022, 2023 and 2024; and to provide any additional information that may be available, such as the breakdown of professions affected, occurrences in mental health services and physical health services and disability services and community and hospital services. – Liam Quaide

Dear Deputy

I refer to your PQ request 33390/25 which was forwarded to the HSE for response.

Background

With regard to the above request for information, please see below the report on HSE Assaults on 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 for each year 2022, 2023 and 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 17/06/2025

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 year 2022, 2023 and 2024

	2022	2023	2024	Grand Total
Severity Rating				
Negligible	4806	5556	5273	15635
Minor	472	531	537	1540
Moderate	167	199	232	598
Major	12	11	7	30
Grand Total	5457	6297	6049	17803

Table 2. Incidents by Division for each year 2022, 2023 and 2024

Division	2022	2023	2024	Grand Total
Unknown	34	45	42	121
Acute Hospital	1243	1401	1295	3939
Ambulance	32	70	56	158
Disability Services	1163	1378	932	3473
Health & Wellbeing	~	7		12
Mental Health	2176	2460	2823	7459
National Corporate Services	~	~	~	~
Older Persons	668	753	753	2174
Primary Care	129	162	146	437
Social Care	6	20		26
Grand Total	5457	6297	6049	17803

Table 3. Category of Person Affected for each year 2022, 2023 and 2024

Category of Person Affected	2022	2023	2024	Grand Total
Allied Health Professional	285	349	294	928
Ambulance/Service User Transport	33	68	56	157
Catering/Housekeeping	40	63	57	160
Dental	~	11	6	20
Locum	~	~		~
Maintenance/Trades	~	6	~	12
Medical	82	107	100	289
Nursing	3375	3673	3668	10716
Other Staff	1584	1993	1848	5425
Professional Grades	6	7	11	24
Professional Volunteer	~	~	~	~
Tech/Maintenance	45	17	~	64
Grand Total	5457	6297	6049	17803

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

Severity Ratings:

- Negligible incidents accounted for 87.9% of incidents (15635)

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

- Minor incidents accounted for 8.7% of incidents (1540)

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 incidents accounted for 3.3% of incidents (598)

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 incidents accounted for 0.1% of incidents (30)

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.

- There were no extreme incidents reported

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