



**Oifig an Phríomhoifigigh Airgeadais**

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10 07 2025

Deputy Holly Cairns TD,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

**Re PQ 34271 25:** To ask the Minister for Health to provide details of the amount paid to each individual recruitment agency for the hiring of HSE staff; and the number of staff, and their grades, recruited through each agency, from 2019 to date, in tabular form

Dear Deputy Cairns,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. Your PQ above has been referred to me for response.

**Context**

The available supply in the labour market for health workforce continues to be a challenge. This is not unique to Ireland, but rather a global health workforce challenge. Recruitment and retention of Clinical, Nursing and other key staff is a constant challenge and impacts adversely on the ability to maintain safe and effective services. Therefore, as part of the HSE's overarching resourcing approach whereby direct employment does not meet the needs of service delivery requirements, agency staff are utilised. This can be for a variety of reasons, including sick absence replacement, both long and short term, to replace vacancies currently being actively recruited to, to replace maternity leave etc. There are also additional resourcing requirements with the replacement of lost hours in critical services areas following the reversal of the Haddington Road Agreement.

In advance of the filling of these hours via direct employees, there is a need to prioritise critical services for replacement through agency and overtime. Collectively, these give rise to the utilisation of agency resources however while simultaneously running large scale domestic and international recruitment campaigns to fill through direct employment. At times the HSE have been unable to fill a vacancy even via agency. The agencies have indicated that they are experiencing difficulty in recruiting themselves due to a lack of availability and also accommodation availability and costs.

While operating within spend limits, the HSE Senior Leadership Team have committed to fully deliver on the planned activity levels as set out in the HSE National Service Plan including the Waiting List Action Plan and Urgent and Emergency Care Plan. This requires the dual approach of improving the productivity of key services and managing the level and affordability of our workforce through the application of both the HSE's Pay and Non-Pay control limits. This is particularly focused around staffing levels, including getting to levels of agency and overtime which is sustainable into 2025.



The HSE is focussed on maximum delivery of the savings agreed to as part of the two-year funding agreement set out in the National Service Plan for 2025 i.e. new for 2025 and any undelivered in 2024. As part of the overall financial stabilisation of the HSE, significant progress has been made on pay in terms of planning, allocation and control and the new control environment ensures there is absolute clarity on staffing parameters whilst embedding a culture of continuous improvement in productivity. There remains work still to do to achieve the level of agency and overtime savings required and fundamentally hospitals will be more challenged in terms of living within overall pay allocation including direct pay. The focus on 2025 will be reducing this challenge.

In relation to your request for details of *'the amount paid to each individual recruitment agency'* I regret to inform you that the particular information you have requested is not centrally collated nor separately identifiable from the HSE finance ledgers. The data requested is not readily available from the HSE finance ledgers or from previously collated data and would need to be manually extracted by regional finance staff. To extract these records would require an extensive exercise in order to separately identify recruitment costs, including the manual extraction of relevant data by regional finance staff from the numerous HSE financial ledger systems in operation throughout the country and the manual collation of the information. In addition the national finance ledgers would not capture the nature of the recruitment expense, the number of staff to which it relates or their grades.

However, we do have some information readily available, collated previously through a resource intensive exercise, which shows Total payments to recruitment firms by vendor for recruitment costs for the years 2020, 2021 and 2022. Please see **Appendix 1** (separate excel file attached). This is the best information available at this time. The data was sourced from HSE regional finance ledger systems and is for HSE Statutory services only. Please note that it excludes information for the South region as due to systems and resource limitations they were unable to extract the data.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me at [sarah.anderson1@hse.ie](mailto:sarah.anderson1@hse.ie) or tel: 087 9423319.

Yours sincerely

**Sarah Anderson**

**Bainisteoir Ginearálta | General Manager**

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HSE payments to recruitment firms for recruitment costs for the years 2020, 2021 and 2022 by Vendor Name  
HSE Statutory Services only

Source: H&M Personal Finance Ledger System