

13th October 2025

Mr. David Cullinane
Ref: PQ 52618/25

Dear Mr. Cullinane

I refer to your PQ request PQ 52618/25 which was forwarded to the HSE for response.

PQ 52618/25: To ask the Minister for Health the number of assaults recorded against staff at HSE facilities for the first nine months of each year 2023 to 2025, tabular form. – David Cullinane

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 in the first 9 months of each year 2023 to 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 13/10/2025

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 the first 9 months of each year 2023 to 2025

Incidents by Severity Rating	2023									2024									2025									Grand Total
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	
Negligible	495	482	625	589	578	590	557	578	491	528	535	593	596	561	520	568	523	573	538	486	523	582	668	610	570	604	434	14997
Minor	37	43	56	59	48	56	49	45	42	46	48	60	63	44	42	48	45	51	28	34	28	54	63	40	37	48	25	1239
Moderate	16	31	20	15	32	10	15	8	8	14	26	20	23	22	18	23	17	27	16	9	18	19	13	22	15	18	21	496
Major	~	~	~	~		~			~			~	~	~														14
Grand Total	549	557	702	664	658	659	621	631	543	588	609	676	683	628	580	639	585	651	582	529	569	655	744	672	622	670	480	16746

*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 89.56% of incidents (14997)

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

- Minor incidents accounted for 7.40% of incidents (1239)

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 2.96% of incidents (496)

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 0.08% of incidents (14)

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

The HSE National Policy on the Prevention and Management of Work-Related Aggression and Violence 2025 has been reviewed and revised.

Ensuring the safety of employees and service users is a priority concern for the HSE. The HSE does not tolerate verbal or physical aggression in any form by employees, service users, and members of the public or others. While it is accepted that the provision of health services can involve situational conflicts, this recognition should not be equated with considering any form of aggression and/or violence as being inherent, inevitable or acceptable.

Behaviours that challenge are understood to occur on a spectrum from unintentional (clinical) to intentional (non-clinical), even criminal. The appropriate response will vary accordingly from understanding and compassionate management to non-tolerance.

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:

- Risk assessment
- Supporting the implementation of recommendations from recently conducted security audits
- Learning from incident reviews, which will be empowered through the revision of the HSE's Incident Management Framework

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