



Oifig an Phríomhoifigigh Airgeadais
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte,
Seomra 125, Ospidéal Dr. Steevens,
BÁC 8, D08 W2A8

Office of Chief Financial Officer
Health Service Executive,
Room 125, Dr Steevens Hospital,
Dublin 8, D08 W2A8

www.hse.ie
@hselive
t 01 6352542
e cfo@hse.ie

24th October 2025

Deputy Peadar Tóibín TD,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Re PQ 55219 25: *To ask the Minister for Health the number of nurses working in the HSE for a recruitment agency at present.*

Dear Deputy Tóibín,

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.

In relation to your query, I regret to inform you that the number of agency Nurses working across the HSE is not centrally collated and therefore is not available. Nursing agency is managed at a local level. HSE Agency staffing is recorded and monitored based on costs.

Total HSE agency pay costs for HSE Statutory services is disclosed every year in Note 6 – Summary Analysis of Pay Costs in the HSE Annual Financial Statements (AFS). A link to the HSE Annual Reports and Financial Statements is provided below for your convenience.
<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/corporate/annualrpts.html>

In response to your PQ 55219 25, please see **Appendix 1 Table 1** below which shows the total Nursing agency costs for the year 2024 and for the period January to August 2025 which is the most recent data available. The data is for HSE Statutory services only and was sourced from the HSE Annual Financial Statements for the year 2024 and from the HSE Consolidated Financial Intelligence system for YTD August 2025. Please note that the figure for 2025 is draft only and is subject to change.

The majority of agency spend is salary and statutory pay costs such as PRSI, holiday allowance etc. In line with the Protection of Employees (Part -Time Work) Act agency staff have the right to the same basic employment conditions, this includes basic pay, shift premiums, unsocial hours and Sunday rates.

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.



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 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 2025 including the Waiting List Action Plan and Urgent and Emergency Care Operational 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 the future.

The HSE is focussed on maximum delivery of the savings agreed to as part of the two-year funding agreement agreed by Government in July 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 is on reducing this challenge.

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

Yours sincerely

Sarah Anderson

Bainisteoir Ginearálta | General Manager

HSE Airgeadais Corparáideach, An Rannóg Airgeadais Náisiúnta agus Soláthair HSE

Teach Darach, Páirc na Mílaoise, An Nás, Co. Chill Dara, W91 KDC2.

HSE Corporate Finance, HSE National Finance & Procurement Division

Oak House, Millennium Park, Naas, Co Kildare, W91 KDC2.

E: sarah.anderson1@hse.ie

T: 087 9423319



Table 1

HSE Total Nursing Agency Staff costs for 2024 and for the period January to August 2025		
HSE Statutory Services Only		
Staff Category	2024 €m	*YTD Aug 2025 €m
Nursing Agency Staff	159.0	123.8
Source : HSE Annual Financial Statements data for 2024 & HSE Consolidated Financial Intelligence System (CFI) for 2025		
*Note : 2025 figure is draft only and is subject to change.		