

11<sup>th</sup> April 2022

PQ 18441/22

Dear Mr Cullinane,

I refer to your PQ request 18441/22 which was forwarded to the HSE for response.

***To ask the Minister for Health the number of assaults recorded against medical, nursing, midwifery and other health and social care professionals across HSE hospitals and community healthcare facilities in 2021 and to date in 2022; and if he will make a statement on the matter.***

### **Background**

With regard to the above request for information, please see below the report on Assaults on HSE 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 between 01/01/2021 and 31/03/22
- 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
- This report is correct as of 05/04/2022

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 category of person affected in 2021 and from 01/01/22-31/03/22**  
**Comment**

Count of Record Number	Column Labels		
Row Labels	2021	2022	Grand Total
		1	1
Allied Health Professional	119	45	164
Ambulance/Service User Transport	32	6	38
Catering/Housekeeping	39	7	46
Dental	2		2
Locum		1	1
Medical	70	11	81
Nursing	2876	540	3416
Other Staff	1609	282	1891
Professional Grades	1	1	2
Professional Volunteer		1	1
Service User	1		1
Tech/Maintenance	13	15	28
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>4763</b>	<b>909</b>	<b>5672</b>

The figures show that there is a level of annual fluctuation in the reported incidents, 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.

There is an emphasis on training and equipping the workforce effectively with skills on risk identification and the management of violence and aggression.

Training in relation to the Management of Violence and Aggression may be accessed in all services.

The organisation will continue to place an emphasis on the management of work related aggression and violence in 2022 to support the Organisation's strategy and policy.

I trust this will answer your request, however please do not hesitate to contact us should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely



**Nicholas J Parkinson**

**Head of National Health and Safety Function**