



**Oifig an Phríomhoifigigh Airgeadais**  
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31<sup>st</sup> October 2024

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

**Re PQ 41840 24:** *To ask the Minister for Health if the HSE or individual hospitals have engaged private companies for the purpose of debt collection from patients or former patients who have failed to pay their hospital bills; if so, the number of companies that have been engaged; the cost of the contracts; and the name of the companies*

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.

Please see **Appendix 1 Table 1** below which shows the total debt collection costs for HSE Statutory hospitals for the years 2019 to 2022 with a breakdown by company. The data was sourced from the HSE Regional Finance Ledger systems and is for HSE Statutory services only. The data is not readily available from the HSE finance systems however annual data up to 2022 has previously been extracted by each regional finance unit.

Data is not readily available for the year 2023 or to date 2024. The shortcomings in the HSE legacy financial systems are well acknowledged and their replacement by a single standard financial system for the Health Sector is at the core of the Finance Reform programme initiated by the Department of Health.

The HSE policy and procedures for debt collection are covered by NFR B-2 (National Financial Regulations) which is available to view on the HSE website using the following link: [nfrb2.pdf \(hse.ie\)](#)

With effect from 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023 there are no hospital charges for public inpatient care or day service care, with the removal of these charges announced as part of Budget 2023. Inpatient and day service charges still apply for inpatient and day service care up to and including 16<sup>th</sup> April 2023. Patients who attend at public hospitals are, depending on their eligibility and subject to certain exemptions, liable to statutory charges levied under the provisions of the 1970 Health Act. The charges are €100 for an Emergency Department attendance and, prior to its abolition on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023, €80 for an Inpatient/Day Services charge, with the latter charge capped at €800 in a rolling 12 month period. The HSE has a statutory obligation to levy and collect these charges and Hospitals have the discretion to operate instalment payment plans where appropriate. Any debt incurred prior to the abolition of the statutory inpatient charge is subject to the normal financial regulations.

Debt collection continues to be managed at a local hospital level. Hospitals are required, under NFR B-2, to refer an unpaid debt to a collection agency after a period of time from date of billing. If any patient has difficulty paying a hospital bill the regulations allow for the hospital and



the patient to agree an instalment arrangement. We would advise they contact their hospital directly to discuss this on a one to one basis. Hospitals are mindful in implementing these processes that patients may be experiencing stress and/or financial challenges and encourage patients who are having difficulties fulfilling their debt to make contact with the hospital to which the debt is owed in order to make alternative payment arrangements. If hospitals are made aware or become aware of such challenges, agreements may be reached between the patient and hospital on a case by case basis and debt collectors are not included in the process.

The HSE seeks to maximise the recovery of income in a socially responsible, ethical, efficient and cost effective way. It should be noted that the collection of monies owed is a continuous, daily and large scale process.

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*

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**Appendix 1 to PQ 41840 24**

**Table 1**

<b>HSE Debt Collection costs by Company for the years 2019 to 2022 for Acute Hospitals Division HSE Statutory services only</b>				
<b>Company Name</b>	<b>2019 €</b>	<b>2020 €</b>	<b>2021 €</b>	<b>2022 €</b>
CMOS LIMITED			14,490	88,706
CREDIT MANAGEMENT			284	26,895
DEBITASK COLLECTION SERVICES LTD	160,325	166,719	147,175	148,739
DUNRAVEN POINT OF CARE LTD	48,624	22,062	48,588	14,614
GARWYN GROUP	43,600	107,935	18,092	
INTRUM JUSTITIA IRELAND LTD	141,042	36,834	207	
LCMS LTD	293,235	234,523	219,701	233,649
MERCER IRELAND				2,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>686,826</b>	<b>568,074</b>	<b>448,537</b>	<b>514,602</b>
<i>Source: HSE Regional Finance Ledger Systems</i>				