



**Stiúrtóra Náisiúnta
Acmhainní Daonna**

Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhísí,
Sláinte Ospidéal Dr. Steevens',
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Peadar Tóibín, T.D.

Wednesday, October 3, 2024

PQ 36595/24 - To ask the Minister for Health the number of nurses working in the HSE for a recruitment agency at present.

Dear Deputy,

I refer to your recent Parliamentary Question which was sent to the HSE for response.

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. Therefore, as part of the HSE's overarching resourcing approach where 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 for the duration of the recruitment process, to replace maternity leave and other leaves etc.

Agency panels are in place to meet these unexpected absences or surges in demand. While information isn't compiled centrally on the number of agency nurses working in the HSE at present, information is available on the total HSE spend on agency nurses. The agency spend for HSE Statutory services, for quarters 1 and 2 this year 2024 is €76.4 million. Please note that this data was sourced from the HSE Consolidated Financial Intelligence system, and the figures for 2024 are **draft** only and are 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.

Finally, each part of the HSE, including the six HSE Health Regions, National Services and Schemes and the HSE Centre have a clear WTE allocation. The WTE allocation is also accompanied by a spend limit on agency and overtime as part of an overall pay spend limit. This will allow each area to be responsive within the overall funding and WTE allocation available to them.

I trust this is of some assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Catriona McConnellogue
National HR