

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 17th NOVEMBER 2020**

Question

Will the Minister state –

- (a) the figures for August 2020 for staffing levels at the Hospital in an equivalent table to that provided in response to Written Question 375/2019 (showing the two sets of figures for comparative purposes);
- (b) the number of shifts filled by bank nurses in August 2019 and August 2020;
- (c) the number of the staff in post who were agency or locum appointments in August 2019 and in August 2020;
- (d) an estimate, for each staff group, of the additional annual cost, in percentage and in real terms, of using locum or agency workers over substantive employees of the Department;
- (e) the number of locum physiotherapy posts that have been removed since August 2019 and whether the reduction, if any, has affected the delivery of service in that Department;
- (f) to what extent the figures for vacancies in 2019 and 2020 reflect the implementation of a vacancy management factor to enable staffing expenditure to be reduced to meet efficiency savings or rebalanced targets; and
- (g) how he assesses the figures for locum / agency staff for August 2020 against the objective to appoint vacancies with substantive staff rather than continue reliance on agency and locum staff?

Answer

Will the Minister state –

- (a) the figures for August 2020 for staffing levels at the Hospital in an equivalent table to that provided in response to Written Question 375/2019 (showing the two sets of figures for comparative purposes);

Staff Group	Funded posts		Actual staff in posts		Current vacancies	
	Aug 2019	Aug 2020	Aug 2019	Aug 2020	Aug 2019	Aug 2020
Allied Health Professionals	240	223	218	193	22	25
Civil Servants	239	271	190	219	50	42
Manual Workers	347	380	307	249	40	131
Medical Staffing	167	179	160	178	7	1

Nursing and Midwifery	680	706	606	593	74	113
Totals	1673	1759	1481	1432	194	312

(b) the number of shifts filled by bank nurses in August 2019 and August 2020;

The bank shifts filled in 2019 and 2020 were as follows:

August	2019	2020
HCA	760	1813
RN	466	470

(c) the number of the staff in post who were agency or locum appointments in August 2019 and in August 2020;

The number of agency nurses and allied health professionals in post in August 2019 and 2020 were as follows:

Agency	2019	2020
Nurses	36	56
AHP	14	32

(d) an estimate, for each staff group, of the additional annual cost, in percentage and in real terms, of using locum or agency workers over substantive employees of the Department;

Locum and agency staff can attract premium expenditure above a permanent role budget. The Department operates rigorous governance and financial control in respect of the authorisation of agency and locum expenditure, with full consideration to ensuring staffing levels are enough to meet the needs of the service that it is providing.

The table below provides an estimated analysis by staff group of locum and other agency expenditure which has been incurred in comparison to substantive establishment budgets.

January 2019 to December 2019

Staff Group	Additional cost of agency staffing £000's	Additional cost of agency staffing %
	(over)/under	over/under
Allied Health Professionals	159	0.80%
Civil Servants	(1,502)	-7.11%
Manual Workers	405	2.87%
Medical Staffing	(3,041)	-12.45%
Nursing & Midwifery	135	0.23%
Grand Total	(3,843)	-2.76%

January 2020 to October 2020

Staff Group	Additional cost of agency staffing £000's	Additional cost of agency staffing %
	(over)/under	over/under
Allied Health Professionals	(1,259)	-7.38%
Civil Servants	(1,006)	-5.37%
Manual Workers	193	1.60%
Medical Staffing	(3,450)	-16.71%
Nursing & Midwifery	(1,709)	-3.24%
Grand Total	(7,232)	-5.97%

- (e) the number of locum physiotherapy posts that have been removed since August 2019 and whether the reduction, if any, has affected the delivery of service in that Department;

In general, locum physiotherapists are used to cover vacancies or long-term absences. Since August 2019, 4 locum physiotherapists have left the physiotherapy department when substantive colleagues were recruited or returned. Two locum colleagues remained with the service to support the Covid response. All physiotherapy services have remained operational.

- (f) to what extent the figures for vacancies in 2019 and 2020 reflect the implementation of a vacancy management factor to enable staffing expenditure to be reduced to meet efficiency savings or rebalanced targets;

The Department manages its budget robustly and through a variety of mechanisms. This clearly includes vacancy management because, as for all organisations, vacancies occur through natural turnover throughout every year. However, what the Department also does is to ensure that staffing levels are sufficient to meet the needs of the service that it is providing.

- (g) how he assesses the figures for locum / agency staff for August 2020 against the objective to appoint vacancies with substantive staff rather than continue reliance on agency and locum staff?

There has been an increase in the use of locum agency staff in response to Covid and also to support an expansion of the workforce whilst permanent recruitment continues to fill vacancies. This is a common approach across all healthcare providers as a way of dealing with the international shortage of qualified nurses and AHPs, but ensuring that the services provided have sufficient staffing levels. The on-Island training opportunities for nurses provide another recruitment route into some of these roles.