

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER CENTRAL
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 3rd OCTOBER 2022
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 10th OCTOBER 2022**

Question

Further to the response to Written Question 15/2022, in which it was confirmed that, in November 2021, there were 353 vacancies in 14 budget areas within Health and Community Services and which stated that “further work continues to validate these figures with the aim of publishing vacancies in this format on a regular basis”, will the Minister advise –

- (a) how regularly this data will be published and when it will begin;
- (b) the latest vacancy figures for these 14 areas;
- (c) the number of vacancies, from both the 353 cited and the up-to-date figures, that are covered by agency and locum workers or that are new posts yet to be subject to recruitment;
- (d) what special measures, if any, are in place or under consideration to recruit and retain experienced staff in areas of high vacancy rates such as theatre, radiography and adult mental health; and
- (e) what measures, if any, are in place or under consideration to counter any effect on other areas through increased absences provoking excessive cover rates and the production in turn of further high absences; and

will she confirm that the data is not affected by the non-advertising of senior posts?

Answer

- a) The data will be published on a quarterly basis on the second week of the month following the end of that quarter. The the first publication will be January 2023 reflecting data at the end of December 2022.
- b) The vacancy position for these 14 areas at the end of August was:

<u>Budget Area</u>	<u>Vacancy (WTE)</u>
Chief Nurse	8
Medical Director	8
Associate managing director	3
Change Delivery	2
Clinical support services	19
Digital Delivery	0
Group Managing Director	0
Mental Health	61
Non-Clinical Support Services	39
Primary Care and Prevention	0
Social care	45
Medical Services	69

Surgical Services	94
Women's and Children's	27.5
Total	375.5

There are 63 WTE posts currently out to offer and/or with offers accepted. 287 WTE vacant posts are at some stage of the recruitment process, ranging from initiation of job request to pre-employment checks.

- c) Of these vacancies:
- At this time, there are no new posts that are not subject to recruitment. However for some of these posts the recruitment process is yet to commence; and
 - 140 of these vacancies are covered by agency workers (nurses and allied health professionals) or by locum doctors.
- d) For some of the specialist roles a different approach to recruitment is being undertaken:
- For radiographers we have commissioned a social media campaign targeting radiographers in the UK
 - For theatre nurses we have commissioned an international recruitment campaign in India
 - For doctors we have engaged a specialist head-hunter to identify suitable overseas candidates
 - For midwives we have engaged a specialist head-hunter and officers are attending dedicated job fairs

The retention of staff is supported by the ongoing work in response to the Be Heard survey and the ongoing culture, engagement and well being work. It is also envisioned that actions will follow the recommendations made in the Hugo Mascie-Taylor report ([R.117/2022](#)) and the developing workforce plan and workforce strategy. Furthermore, it is envisaged that additional work outside of HCS in relation to key accommodation should also aid both in the recruitment and retention of staff.

- e) It is recognised that the movement of staff from one area to another to cover absence at short notice is unsettling and unsatisfactory for staff, and the department tries to keep it to a minimum; however, it is recognised that on occasion this movement of staff does need to occur.

Several actions have been taken to address this issue:

- There is an agency nurse assigned to each ward, and if redeployment to support another area is required this agency nurse will be the first to be redeployed. They are recruited with that understanding.
- Last minute overtime can now be authorised by the ward manager meaning that in the case of short-term absence they can immediately offer the shifts to substantial staff on the previous shift rather than needing to seek authorisation. The shift will therefore be covered by staff who know the ward and also wish to undertake the shift.
- An additional two agency workers will be recruited (one for the day and one for the night) to ask as “floaters” who can cover any shortfalls across the service.

It should be noted that this reliance on agency workers is expected to decrease as the department recruit to a team of bank staff who will be unallocated to any specific ward, but skilled to cover shortfalls in shift patterns.

This data is not affected by the non-advertising of senior roles.