

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
BY SENATOR S.C. FERGUSON  
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 29th MARCH 2011**

**Question**

Given that Health and Social Services has several vacancies for Middle Grade doctors, will the Minister state which of these vacancies are at present filled by locum doctors?

Will the Minister explain in detail the process of employing locums?

- a) Are posts advertised, or are agencies used?
- b) In each department, who is responsible for selecting candidates?
- c) How are the competencies of candidates assessed?
- d) In what circumstances are interviews held?
- e) What references are sought and who assesses these references?
- f) How does the new locum screening system operate?
- g) What is involved in the induction process of the successful candidate, who plans this and who undertakes it?
- h) How is the performance of locum doctors appraised once they have started work?
- i) Who is responsible for appraisal?
- j) Who is responsible for modifying the locum's job plan in the event that he / she proves not to have the expected competencies?

**Answer**

The number of vacant middle grade posts currently filled by locums is 6. Please note, as previously stated the number of vacancies and number of locums is subject to variation depending on current and on-going recruitment processes.

- a. When the need for a locum arises, the timescale and urgency of the request determines the recruitment process and whether it can be advertised in the medical journals, or whether cover would be sought via the internal bank or locum agencies.

Typically, internal and bank cover is sought in the first instance. For longer term locums, post are advertised in the British Medical Journal, but may be placed with locum agencies if appointments are not made via the advertisement or there is an immediate need to arrange suitable medical cover.

- b. The Lead Consultant and at least one other of their Consultant colleagues are responsible for selecting candidates. The States' Medical Staffing team ensure all employment documents and pre-employment checks are up to date and complaint before sending CVs to the Consultant's for short listing.
- c. Competencies are assessed through Person Specifications and Competency documents. Newly appointed locum doctors are assessed on arrival by lead clinicians to establish their level of competence and the boundaries of their current practise.
- d. Interviews are held if posts have been advertised in the medical journals. Locums provided via agency will undergo a telephone interview if time permits. For locums required immediately, this may not always be possible and assessments are made on the information contained within the CV and references.
- e. A minimum of two references are obtained for each candidate, one of which must be provided by their current or most recent employer. These references are assessed by Consultants in the relevant department. In specialties with more than one consultant, they all would be sent CV's and references for assessment.
- f. A revised process for appointing locum doctors covering the points detailed in this response was introduced in March 2009. Verita reviewed the effectiveness of this process in December 2010 and noted that the Department was achieving full compliance.
- g. On their first day and before they commence clinical duties, locum doctors report to Medical Staffing for ID checks. During this meeting Medical Staffing go through the first part of the induction checklist with them. The Locum doctor undergoes a departmental induction with the Lead Consultant/designated Consultant, who completes and signs the checklist before returning it to Medical Staffing.

HSSD is also currently trialling an on-line induction process that is gaining national recognition.

- h. Ongoing assessment and appraisal regarding the performance and capability of locum doctors rests with the Lead Clinician in each specialty. Any areas for concern are raised with the Medical Director and Medical Staffing Manager.
- i. An appraisal/assessment form is sent to the consultant after the doctor has completed the locum appointment requesting details of performance and confirmation of whether they are suitable to be re-engaged in the future.
- j. Lead Clinicians, with the support from operational management and the medical staffing team are responsible for modifying the locum's job plan in the event the doctor does not to have the expected competencies in specific clinical areas.