

30th January 2020

Deputy Stephen Donnelly TD  
Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2

**RE: PQ 52245/19**

*To ask the Minister for Health the number of nursing positions vacant in the Dublin Midlands Hospital Group as of 6th December 2019*

Dear Deputy Donnelly

There are a total of 370 vacant Nursing & Midwifery Posts across the seven Hospitals in the Dublin Midlands Hospital Group. The vacancies include both Permanent and Temporary Nursing and Midwifery posts.

The Dublin Midlands Hospital Group has had an increase of +192 wtes in the nursing and midwifery staff category during 2019. This includes an increase of +141wte staff nurses / midwives.

Of a total complement of 3,991 (Nov 19) Nurse and Midwifery staff across the DMHG, there was 151.65 full time vacancies (All Grades) (where 50% are promotional grades and have been filled in an acting capacity and approx 50% are staff grades where agency is used to replace the vacant post) and 218.52 temporary vacancies (All Grades) (Including Maternity & Other Leave) as of 6<sup>th</sup> December 2019,

**Please note that the data above should be collated based on the following criteria:**

**A Permanent Vacancy** is defined as a post which has funding allocated and is within the agreed headcount, and is available for filling on a permanent basis.

**A Temporary Vacancy** is defined as a post that has been funded and is within the agreed headcount and is vacant on a short term basis ( eg promotion of the permanent occupant to a higher grade post in an “acting capacity”, maternity leave, career break or other)

The above vacancies are a combination of Staff Nurse and Staff Midwife Posts inclusive of Nursing and Midwifery Management posts ( eg Clinical Nurse Manager 1’s, 2’s and 3’s inclusive of Assistant Director of Nursing and Midwifery and Director posts).

Strategic workforce planning is essential to ensure adequate numbers and appropriately experienced Nurses Midwives are employed to deliver high quality care to our patients as set out in the HSE Service Plan (2020).The Hospital Group and each individual Hospital utilise a multiplicity of methods to ensure that Nursing and Midwifery staffing levels match the needs of the service, to include:

**Graduate Recruitment:**

- Offers of employment to 100% of the Nursing & Midwifery graduates within our Hospitals annually.

- Facilitate post graduate education in key speciality areas to attract staff to enhance recruitment to those specialities
- Efforts specifically employed to re engage graduates who have chosen to gain overseas experience to include the “Bring them Home campaign” and also to maintain communication with our recent graduates.

### **National Recruitment:**

- Rolling recruitment campaigns Nationally supported by individual Hospital Open days to showcase and encourage recruitment
- Hospitals working together to support each others recruitment needs.
- Promotional posts filled in “an acting capacity” to ensure prompt appointment while awaiting the permanent competition.

### **International Recruitment:**

- Attendance at Job Fairs to promote working within the DMHG
- International Recruitment managed by individual Hospitals and within the HSE Overseas recruitment framework (includes European & Non European recruitment)
- International Recruitment co ordinated by an agent employed to recruit for certain specialities

### **Use of Agency:**

- In line with the Agency framework, agency nurses are employed to fill staff nurse/ midwife vacancies also.

Overall recruitment of both nurses and midwives remains challenging and a number of factors contribute to the mismatch between supply and demand to include:

- Inadequate numbers of nurses and midwives being trained. Approximately 1500 nurses and midwives graduate annually and each year there are approximately 1,500 requests for verification of service to facilitate overseas travel/ employment.
- Legacy issue where staffing levels on General Medical Wards and Surgical Wards have not been adjusted over the years (20 years) as the needs of the patients (more acutely ill ) require higher levels of care.
- Legacy issues from both the moratorium, where all graduates emigrated, and early retirement initiative has resulted in a gap of the staff who would now have 5 – 10 years experience and 35 – 40 years experience.
- Changing demands of Healthcare (demographics & epidemiology) and changing roles of nurses and midwives. This grade of staff are needed to taking on more (ie more specialist and advanced practice roles). This includes nurses and midwives embracing the new roles in line with both the Maternity Strategy and Slaintecare working into the Community.

Yours Sincerely



**Mr Trevor O' Callaghan**  
**Chief Executive Officer**