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27 March 2019

Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

> PQ 5941/19: To ask the Minister for Health the number of nurses working in the health service by grade (details supplied); the way in which this compares with the same statistics in each of the past ten years; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Boyd Barrett,

I refer to your recent parliamentary question in relation to numbers of personnel employed in the public health service which was forwarded to the HSE by the Department of Health for direct reply.

Firstly, I should point out that staffing figures provided generally relate to direct employment levels as returned through the Health Service Personnel Census (HSPC), which is the official employment count for the public health sector (HSE and Section 38 Voluntary Hospitals & Agencies. Numbers equating to service levels are expressed as whole-time equivalents (WTE) taking account of part-time working, whereas headcount figures give the number of individuals.

In relation to the Deputy's central question, at 31st December 2018, there were 135,742 personnel (equating to 117,857 WTE) directly employed in the provision of Health and Social Care Services and of which almost one-third were nurses. The Deputy will be interested to note that the 10 year period covered by this request covers the period 2008 to 2013 which represents the fall in health sector employment during the economic downturn while the following period, 2013-2018, represents the subsequential recovery in nursing & midwifery staff numbers.

Details, by Staff Group as requested by the Deputy are set out in the following table:

Public Health Service Nursing & Midwifery (2008-2018)

WTE Nursing & Midwifery	Nurse/ Midwife Manager	Nurse/ Midwife Specialist & AN/MP	Staff Nurse/ Staff Midwife	Public Health Nurse	Nursing/ Midwifery Student	Nursing/ Midwifery other	Total Nursing & Midwifery
Dec-08	7,481	875	27,461	1,523	408	360	38,108
Dec-09	7,232	912	27,011	1,558	394	359	37,466
Dec-10	6,952	993	26,192	1,554	450	362	36,503
Dec-11	6,727	1,107	25,717	1,549	445	358	35,902
Dec-12	6,345	1,154	24,889	1,517	410	321	34,637
Dec-13	6,254	1,239	24,541	1,495	336	313	34,178
Dec-14	6,602	1,332	24,423	1,460	404	289	34,509
Dec-15	6,947	1,475	24,749	1,501	387	295	35,353
Dec-16	7,279	1,579	24,768	1,499	405	305	35,835
Dec-17	7,434	1,706	25,315	1,514	500	308	36,777
Dec-18	7,799	1,860	25,595	1,541	533	317	37,644
Change 2008 - 2018	*+318*	*+985*	*-1,867*	*+18*	*+125*	*-43*	*-464*
Change 2008 - 2013	*-1,227*	*+364*	*-2,920*	*-28*	*-72*	*-47*	*-3,930*
Change 2013 - 2018	*+1,545*	*+621*	*+1,053*	*+46*	*+197*	*+4*	*+3,466*

Source: Health Service Personnel Census
Note [1]: Health Sector staffing figures relate to direct employment levels as returned through the Health Service Personnel Census (HSPC) for the public health sector (HSE & Section 38 Voluntary Agencies).
Note[2]: Figures relating to service levels are express as while-time equivalents (WTE) in order to take account of part-time working.

Finally, nursing & midwifery offers a comprehensive career pathway from Staff Nurse and Midwife to Clinical Specialist or Advanced Practitioner, together with leadership roles in nursing & midwifery management. The Deputy will note the increases in the number of Nurse/ Midwife Managers and also Nursing & Midwifery Specialist and Advanced Practice roles. These are key roles in both the provision and oversight of direct patient care activities, and offer enhanced service delivery through for example nurse and midwife led services in a variety of settings across our services.

Workforce levels are updated monthly and are available at:
https://hse.ie/eng/staff/resources/our-workforce/

I trust that this information is sufficient to meet the Deputy's needs.

Yours sincerely,

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Des Williams
General Manager

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