



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

Office of the Chief Clinical Officer  
Dr Steevens' Hospital|Steevens' Lane|Dublin 8|D08 W2A8  
email: [cco@hse.ie](mailto:cco@hse.ie)

Oifig an Phríomhoifigigh Clínicíúil  
Ospidéal Dr Steevens|Lána Steevens|Baile Átha Cliath 8|D08 W2A8

**BY EMAIL ONLY**

**Deputy Catherine Connolly**

Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2

21/09/2021

**PQ 43638-21 – Deputy Catherine Connolly: To ask the Minister for Health the number of whole-time equivalent specialists in public health medicine currently employed by the HSE; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Connolly,

Thank you for your representation.

WTEs in DPH by Discipline (as of w/e March 19th, 2021). Since this date, recruitment of pandemic plan posts has progressed considerably as detailed below.

Discipline	Existing WTE Permanent Posts in June 2020	Total new posts in pandemic plan	Current WTE permanent posts	Temporary WTE posts in place
Specialist in Public Health Medicine	38.05	1	39.88	8.6
Nursing	11.56	58	9.97	56.6
Senior Medical Officers	33.6	4.5	31.34	12.4
Surveillance	26.56	40	38.17	57.6
Administration	39.17	67.5	55.56	81.04
Other Medical	-	-	-	6.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>148.94</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>174.92</b>	<b>223.14</b>

The pandemic workforce plan, which was approved and funded by the Department of Health in Q4 2020. With full implementation, this plan will deliver 171 WTE permanent resources to Departments

of Public Health across medical, nursing, surveillance / epidemiology, operations management and administrative support, as well as temporary surge capacity.

By the end of 2020, there were 418 WTEs employed across all Public Health Departments, representing an increase of 101 since 18/09/2020. The current recruitment status of the 171 WTE permanent resources approved for the Public Health Departments is outlined in the tables below.

**Permanent posts approved under the Public Health Pandemic Plan by grade and Department of Public Health**

Department of Public Health	Surveillance & Epidemiology	Mgmt & Admin	Medical	Nursing	Total
DPH East	4	31.5		16	51.5
DPH Midlands	1	6.5		4	11.5
DPH Midwest	1	10	1	8	20
DPH North East	3	12.3	2	7	24.3
DPH North West		5	1	3	9
DPH South	1	10		7	18
DPH South East	1	10	2	6	19
DPH West	2	10		6	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>85.3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>171.3</b>
<b>* Including surveillance assistants who are aligned to management admin grades</b>					

Acknowledging that permanent resources within the public health function were, at the time, insufficient across all disciplines to sustain Covid-19 response over the course of 6 – 18 months, the CCO commissioned a special purpose working group to develop a workforce plan in Q3 2020, which was approved and funded by the Department of Health in Q4 2020. With full implementation, this plan will deliver 171 WTE permanent resources to Departments of Public Health across medical, nursing, surveillance / epidemiology, operations management and administrative support, as well as temporary surge capacity.

In Q4 2020, a dedicated Public Health Pandemic Recruitment team was mobilised to progress recruitment of these posts at pace. Services were provided sanction to fill all approved vacancies (temporary and permanent) with temporary staff pending permanent appointment. By the end of 2020, there were 418 WTEs employed across all Public Health Departments, representing an increase of 101 since 18/09/2020.

The recruitment status of the 171 WTE permanent resources approved for the Public Health Departments is outlined in the table below.

Department	Posts in Pre-employment	Posts Commencing	Posts Commenced	Total Posts Accepted	Total Required	% Complete
DPH East	0	1	24.5	25.5	51.5	50%
DPH Midlands	0	0	10.5	10.5	11.5	91%
DPH North East	0	0	17	17	24	70%

Department	Posts in Pre-employment	Posts Commencing	Posts Commenced	Total Posts Accepted	Total Required	% Complete
DPH North West	0	0	7	7	9	78%
DPH South	0	1	10	11	18	61%
DPH South East	0	0	14	14	19	74%
DPH Midwest	1	0	12	13	20	65%
DPH West	0	0	13	13	18	72%
<b>Total</b>	1	2	108	111	171	

Second round, geographically targeted campaigns are currently under way to fill remaining vacancies unfilled following the first round campaigns. The recruitment environment is very competitive, particularly in the Eastern region.

All 171 WTE of these approved permanent resources will be retained. The requirement to fill approved permanent posts via agency on a temporary basis will decrease as recruitment progresses and permanent resources are on-boarded.

As pandemic demand recedes, these resources will be realigned within departments of Public Health to support the resumption of the full remit of services across all domains of public health practice (health protection, health service improvement, health improvement and health intelligence) within fundamentally reformed and strengthened, consultant delivered model of Public Health Service delivery.

I hope this provides you with assistance.

Yours sincerely,




---

Sharon Hayden  
General Manager  
Office of the CCO