



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

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BY EMAIL ONLY

Deputy Catherine Connolly

Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

21/09/2021

PQ 43640-21 – Deputy Catherine Connolly: To ask the Minister for Health the number of additional public health roles of the 255 announced in September 2020 which have been filled to date; the breakdown of the specific positions filled; when all 255 roles will be filled; 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
Total	148.94	171	174.92	223.14

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
Total	11	85.3	6	51	171.3
* Including surveillance assistants who are aligned to management admin grades					

Progress towards recruitment of Public Health Pandemic Plan Resources

Department	% Complete
DPH East	48%
DPH Midlands	91%
DPH North East	74%
DPH North West	89%
DPH South	67%
DPH South East	74%
DPH Midwest	65%
DPH West	83%
TOTAL	68%

As detailed above, overall recruitment is 68% complete. In Q1/2 2021 Recruitment team capacity was prioritised towards high volume campaigns and on boarding clinical capacity. During Q3 2021, recruitment team capacity was directed towards running bespoke campaigns for specialised national roles and outsourcing second round campaigns, this means there is a lead time to new resources coming on stream. Recruitment has been ongoing despite a challenging and competitive recruitment market. Campaigns continue to progress at pace and review is underway to optimise resourcing opportunities to year end.

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%
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%
Total	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