



Oifig an Stiúirthóra Náisiúnta, Acmhainní Daonna

Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte

Ospidéal Dr. Steevens'

Baile Átha Cliath 8

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Health Service Executive

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Richard Boyd Barrett T.D.

14 March 2022

**PQ 2454/22** - To ask the Minister for Health if he will conduct a review of staffing levels across the health service and ensure that extra permanent posts are sanctioned to ensure that the health service can increase its capacity on a permanent basis to deal with non-Covid-19 care and the almost one million persons on waiting lists; and if he will make a statement on the matter – Richard Boyd Barrett

Dear Deputy Barrett,

I refer to your recent parliamentary question in relation to health service staffing capacity for non-Covid care and waiting lists which was forwarded to the Health Services Executive (HSE) by the Department of Health for direct reply.

Firstly, the Deputy will be interested to note that, employment levels at the end of January 2022 show there were 150,903 personnel (*equating to 132,323 whole-time equivalents*) directly employed in the provision of Health & Social Care Services by the HSE and the various Section 38 hospitals. This figure represents an increase in staffing of +13,152 WTE (+11.0%) over the 31 December. Of note this figure excludes those recruited outside of direct HSE employment for test and trace and national vaccination for which there is a minimum of a further 2,500 staff.

Throughout 2020 and 2021, the Health Service, in its response to the national COVID-19 Pandemic, has delivered on a significantly ambitious recruitment and resourcing plan. In addition, our health service has also had to manage a criminal cyber-attack, which also impacted on our recruitment capacity.

The [HSE National Service Plan 2022](#) is accompanied by a separate Resourcing Strategy. The strategy sets out the resourcing approach to support NSP 2022 alongside and the key actions and activities to achieve same. Both the NSP and Resourcing Strategy sets out the total increase in staffing levels across our services, for which 2022 sets out an upper target of over +10,000 WTE over staffing levels as at December 31<sup>st</sup> 2021.

In relation to the Deputy's specific question around waiting lists, the recently published 2022 Waiting List Action is the first year of a multi-annual reform programme to stabilise and reduce waiting lists and waiting times for elective care in Ireland, bringing about significant and lasting change in waiting list numbers. This Plan details how the Department of Health, the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF) intend to ensure that approximately 1.7 million, are treated and removed from waiting lists.

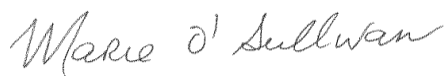
This ambitious Plan identifies 45 actions as part of a comprehensive twin-track approach of investment to reduce and reform waiting lists. Targeted investment aims to get many more people treated as quickly as possible. At the same time, reforming and investing in our public health service will eradicate the gap between demand and permanent capacity by addressing long-term reforms like improving patient pathways of care, enhancing data collection and information sharing, and revising waiting-list management protocols.

As part of this plan, €200m has been allocated to the HSE in 2022 (with a further €150m allocated to the NTPF) on a non-recurrent basis, much of which will be utilised to provide additional activity both within the hospital and by outsourcing activity to the private sector. Part of this reform is to work at Hospital Group, Hospital and Speciality level to identify capacity gaps where additional resources are required and, subject to funding, these capacity issues will be addressed. As mentioned earlier, this is the first year of a multi-annual reform programme to address the waiting times which aims to reduce waiting lists by 18 percent this year alone.

Finally, the HSE conducts a monthly census of public health services employment across all services covering the HSE and Section 38 Voluntary Hospitals & Agencies. The Health Services Personnel Census (HSPC) is the official employment count for the public health sector and is routinely published at <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/resources/our-workforce/workforce-reporting/>.

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

Yours sincerely,



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**Marie O'Sullivan**  
**National HR**