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27th June 2022

Deputy Smith
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ Ref 32599/22: To ask the Minister for Health the number of midwives that are employed by the HSE nationwide; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

PQ Ref 32600.22: To ask the Minister for Health how far below optimum levels of staffing of midwives employed by the HSE are; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Smith.

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

The table below contains (full) whole-time equivalent and head count details for midwifery graded staff at the 30 April for the last 3 years, who are actively on the payroll of the HSE.

It should be noted that figures will include staffing personnel such as Directors of Midwifery, Clinical Midwife Managers, Midwife Specialists, Senior Midwives, Staff Midwives and Midwifery Students where applicable. However it will not include other staff who may be directly involved in the provision of maternity care in the 19 services such as theatre nurses, general nurses, health care assistants and ultrasonographers from a radiography professional background, nor will the figures include vacant midwifery posts that are being actively recruited into – either from a replacement perspective or newly funded posts.

It is also important to note that these figures represent a snapshot in time, and like any other part of the system, maternity services will have a natural turnover of staff arising from retirements and resignations.

Since its inception in 2017, NWIHP has continued to make significant investment in nursing and midwifery posts, with circa 330 WTEs approved to date across a range of service areas and sites.

Following the 2020 HIQA report ‘Overview report of HIQA’s monitoring programme against the National Standards for Safer Better Maternity Services, with a focus on obstetric emergencies’ eight key recommendations were listed. Recommendation 3 cited ‘The HSE should conduct a review of current workforce arrangements in each maternity unit or hospital nationally to determine the required levels of staff and skill-mix needed in the medical specialties of obstetrics, anaesthesiology, paediatrics and neonatology and the professions of midwifery and nursing.

On foot of this recommendation, NWIHP working with the HSE HR Directorate, has commenced and MDT workforce planning exercise, which will encompass midwifery as a key component, in order to develop and integrated workforce plan for maternity services. The Integrated Workforce Plan for maternity services will seek to identify the workforce requirement for the next five years.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,



Mary-Jo Biggs, General Manager, National Women and Infants Health Programme

Hospital/ Hospital Groups, CHOs / Care Group, HWB & Corporate Function	WTE Apr 2020	WTE Apr 2021	WTE Apr 2022	No. Apr 2020	No. Apr 2021	No. Apr 2022
Midwives	2,119.8	2,234.8	2,109.6	2,568	2,696	2,640
Coombe Women & Infants University	246.4	273.3	243.9	283	330	292
MRH Portlaoise	39.1	40.5	45.2	46	48	53
Dublin Midlands Hospital Group	285.5	313.9	289.1	329	378	345
MRH Mullingar	57.4	58.9	54.0	69	68	64
National Maternity	307.9	326.4	293.2	371	377	342
St Luke's General Kilkenny	50.9	47.9	46.9	61	61	59
Wexford General	50.0	54.8	49.7	60	65	59
Ireland East Hospital Group	466.2	488.0	443.8	561	571	524
Cavan General	54.8	57.1	57.9	65	70	70
Our Lady of Lourdes	128.7	128.7	124.9	158	158	146
Rotunda	275.1	275.6	281.5	340	341	340
RCSI Hospitals Group	458.6	461.4	464.2	563	569	556
Galway University	131.2	154.9	141.8	164	193	173
Letterkenny University	51.3	60.0	55.5	73	79	72
Mayo University	36.1	64.8	66.0	44	78	80
Portlincula University	54.4	53.4	53.4	62	61	61
Sligo University	48.6	57.4	55.6	64	70	70
Saolta University Hospital Care	321.6	390.5	372.2	407	481	558
Cork University	262.1	262.5	246.3	319	317	301
South Tipperary General	33.7	28.3	24.7	40	36	33
UH Kerry	31.0	22.1	23.8	39	26	29
UH Waterford	54.4	57.8	54.1	63	68	64
South/South West Hospital Group	381.2	370.7	348.9	461	447	427
UMH Limerick	206.7	210.5	191.3	247	250	230
University of Limerick Hospital Group	206.7	210.5	191.3	247	250	230