



23 February 2023

Deputy Seán Haughey
Dáil Éireann
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

PQ Number: 7521/23

Question: To ask the Minister for Health the number of consultant post vacancies in public hospitals across the country; the number of consultants that are currently being trained to fill this gap; and if he will make a statement on the matter – Seán Haughey

Dear Deputy Haughey,

The data in the attached is extracted from DIME (Doctors Integrated Management E-system) as at **7th January 2023**. DIME is dependent on clinical sites inputting details on their consultant workforce and therefore there may be variances and gaps in the data supplied to that held within clinical sites. As DIME is a live system it must be noted that there can be variances in the figures published dependent on the run date of the report as entries can be made with a retrospective date.

Table 1: Number of vacant (Consultant Applications Advisory Committee) CAAC Approved Consultant Posts at 07.02.2023*

Total number of vacant consultant posts	166
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* *Consultant Posts which had been occupied previously and are now vacant*

Table 2: Number of new additional service posts approved by Consultant Applications Advisory Committee since 2021*

Consultant posts – newly created posts and currently under recruitment	332
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* *Refers to new additional consultant service posts approved by CAAC since 2021 which are awaiting or undergoing recruitment. Recruitment for the new post has most likely been initiated. It should be noted that there is often a significant period of time between approval of a consultant post through CAAC to the commencement of the recruitment process and ultimately the recruitment of a Consultant to a post.*

Definition of Status

Approved: The post has been approved through the Consultant Applications Advisory Committee (CAAC) process.

Vacant: A post which had been occupied previously, regardless of tenure, but is now vacant as verified by the clinical site on DIME.

Training pipeline to fill Consultant posts

Higher Specialist Trainees (HST)

HST is the final step on the path to specialisation in medicine in Ireland. On completion of HST, trainees are eligible to register with the Medical Council of Ireland as a specialist and can begin to apply for consultant and GP posts. The duration of HST is two to six years. Table 3 shows the intake into HST posts since 2018. Over the past five years the intake into HST posts has increased at a rate of 6.1% p.a. on average.

Table 3: Five year Intake to Higher Specialist Training programmes (inc GP)				
2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
497	527	541	573	629

Certificate Satisfactory Completion of Specialist Training (CSCST)

Upon completion of higher specialist training doctors are awarded a CSCST and are then eligible to enter onto the specialist division of the medical practitioners register maintained by the Medical Council of Ireland and to apply for consultant and GP posts. Table 4 shows the number of trained specialists produced by the training system from 2018 to 2022. Given the length of postgraduate training (4-6 years) the increases to HST training programmes noted in Table 3 have not yet been fully reflected in the CSCST data, however the number of CSCST graduates has increased by 3.5% p.a between 2018 to 2022 and is substantially higher in 2022 compared to 2018. Further increases to the CSCST graduates are expected in line with targeted annual growth in HST programmes.

Table 4: HST Completion 2018-2022 (inc GP)				
2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
385	334	313	361	441

Yours sincerely,



Leah O'Toole

Assistant National Director