

CC/MB/MC

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23rd June 2023

Mr Martin Browne TD,  
Dáil Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2

PQ 23811/23

To ask the Minister for Health the number of approved ICU staffing allocations in the ICU at University Hospital Limerick for each of the years 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and to date in 2023; the number of staffing vacancies in the ICU at University Hospital Limerick for the corresponding timeframe; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Martin Browne

Dear Deputy Browne,

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.

Please see below for a breakdown outlining the ICU staffing allocations for University Hospital Limerick for 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 up to the end of May of each year. Also included below are the staffing deficits for the same period.

ICU Approved Staffing Allocations					
Medical/Dental	NB - Medical WTE numbers cannot be specifically provided as ICU medical cover is only one part of the consultant anaesthesiologists' work schedule. For ease of reference, included are WTE numbers for all consultant anaesthesiologists' posts.				
WTE Consultant Anaesthesiologists	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Consultant Posts	18	21	21	23	27

SHOs	16	11	22	21	22
Registrars	6	13	8.5	5.5	9
Specialist Registrars	4	6	5	9	9
<b>ICU Approved Staffing Allocations</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
Staff nurses and Clinical Nurse Managers	71.5	71.5	88.3	88.3	91.83
Management & Admin	1	1	2	3	2
Patient & Client Care	13	16	19	17	17
<b>ICU Staffing Levels Support Staff</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
Hygiene staff	2.02	2.02	3.02	3.02	3.02
Catering staff	1	1.75	1.92	1.92	1.92
Porters	2.6	4	4	4	4
<b>ICU Staffing Vacancies</b>					
	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
Staff nurses and Clinical Nurse Managers	1.65	2.8	6.82	0	11.78

Consultant Posts Vacant	5	7	7	6	2
Management & Admin	NB - The ULHG HR management system is not able to provide a report on historical vacancies in these areas.				0
Support Staff					
Patient & Client Care					

It is important to note that the increases in staffing outlined above can be attributed to the scale-up in staffing to meet the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and new bed capacity including two additional ICU beds and eight additional HDU beds added to University Hospital Limerick. There are currently 28 critical care beds at UHL, of which 12 are in the hospital's Intensive Care Unit, and 16 in the High Dependency Unit.

Recruitment of ICU staff is an international issue and UL Hospitals has made a number of efforts to secure staffing through bespoke national and international recruitment campaigns to fill deficits. These campaigns have enjoyed some success in spite of the challenging recruitment environment. These efforts are ongoing and continue to attract nurses to the area of critical care.

A job in the ICU remains very much sought after by new nursing graduates, a number of whom have expressed interest in working in the unit and will commence in the final quarter of this year. For example, there is a very robust training programme for ICU nurses new to the unit where they are supported by six clinical educators who are of great benefit to our patients and staff alike.

I trust this clarifies the position, please contact me if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely,



**Prof Colette Cowan**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**UL Hospitals Group**