

**Príomhoifigeach Daoine**

Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhísí
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Mr. Michael Cahill, TD

06 May 2025

PQ 19613/25 (Health) To ask the Minister for Health if the recruitment embargo will be lifted from the health services, particularly attritional staff reductions due to retirements, resignations, and so on; and if she will make a statement on the matter. - Michael Cahill

Dear Deputy,

I refer to your recent Parliamentary Question which was sent to the HSE for response.

The Pay & Numbers Strategy for 2024 as agreed in July 2024, for Department of Health funded services only, provided for the retention and funding for approx. 4,000 WTE, that were due to excess recruitment at the end of 2023 and the retention of once of funding provided for COVID-19 posts. This has enabled the retention of 4,000 posts across the publicly funded health system, inclusive of all posts occupied at this time. This agreement has also provided clarity on the funded workforce for the health services, based on the agreement that as at 31st December 2023 - all posts occupied and reporting WTE on the Health Service Personnel Census (HSPC) on this date are comprehended and considered as funded. Trainees currently, are comprehended by this measure.

The Deputy may also be interested to know that the Pay and Numbers Strategy agreed in July 2024, also provided for a two-year expenditure agreement, which has enabled clarity on the approved WTE over this period. Added to the December 2023 baseline, in 2024 there were a further 3,310 WTE new service developments and agency conversion, and again for 2025 there are a further 3,553 WTE in new service developments being added. This is a total net WTE addition of 6,863 WTE over the two-year agreement timeframe. This has provided clarity for the health service on a total WTE for Department of Health funded services a 133,306 WTE for end of December 2025. It has provided clarity for each of the new six Health Regions and each national service with its own specified number of WTEs for which they can within that approved number, replace, recruit and prioritise.

This provides greater autonomy and authority for regional services in responding to the needs of the population to prioritise decisions on the filling of posts, with those decisions made closer to the point of service delivery. This includes in respect of attritional staff reductions due to retirements, resignations and so on.

I trust this response is of some assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Mairéad Ryan
National HR