



11 July 2025

Deputy Darren O'Rourke, TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

RE: PQ 36613/25

To ask the Minister for Health that considering 31% of patients from an NAI survey reported waiting times of 1-2 years to see a neurologist, the measures she is taking to increase capacity and reduce waiting times; and the number of consultant neurologists there were in 2024 and to date in 2025

Dear Deputy O'Rourke,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in relation to the above parliamentary question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have consulted with the National Clinical Programme for Neurology (NCPN) and the National Clinical Advisor and Group Lead (NCAGL) Acutes on your question and have been informed that the following outlines the position.

The National Clinical Programme for Neurology (NCPN) recognises that neurological care should be equitably distributed across the country. This is one of the core principles of the HSE's National Clinical Programme for Neurology Model of Care (2016)¹. This Model of Care was developed to provide a framework for neurology services, which follows best international practice and should be delivered within an integrated service approach. It recommends that neurology services be developed in all model 3 and 4 hospitals.

To achieve the best quality care and equitable access to neurology services, the National Clinical Programme for Neurology (NCPN) envisages the formalisation of a Hub and Spoke model aligned to Health Regions. This Hub and Spoke Model arranges service delivery into a network consisting of an anchor "Hub" establishment. The Hubs should be resourced to provide a full array of neurological services, complemented by secondary establishments, "Spokes", which offer neurological services to patients with less complex needs, with rapid and efficient access to the hub as required.

It is expected that this proposed Hub and Spoke model will enable reduction in waiting lists, timely access for people with neurological symptoms to expedite diagnosis and treatment in order to improve quality of life and prognosis.

Funding was allocated for new service developments of neurology services in 2025, including five new consultant neurologist posts to support the hub and spoke model in the Health Regions outlined below:

Health Region	Spoke Neurology Service Location	Hub Location
HSE Dublin & Midlands	1. MRH Portlaoise	1. Tallaght University Hospital
HSE Dublin & South East	2. Wexford General	2. Waterford University Hospital
HSE South West	3. UH Kerry	3. Cork University Hospital
HSE West & North West	4. Letterkenny University	4. Sligo University Hospital
	5. Mayo University	5. University Hospital Galway

The National Clinical Programme for Neurology (NCPN) recognises that skilled and highly trained staff add value to neurological services. NCPN endorses the expansion of the workforce dedicated to Neurology and in line with the Neurology Model of Care (2016) and Sláintecare.



The National Clinical Programme for Neurology (NCPN) Model of Care¹, by design, weighs heavily on nursing workforce to respond to the chronicity of neurological conditions and navigate patients through primary, secondary and tertiary care for optimal patient outcomes. A key focus is on building capacity within neurology clinics and developing nursing networks with nurse-led outpatient and outreach clinics.

These principles align with the strategic objectives set out by the Department of Health (DoH) Policy on Graduate, Specialist and Advanced Nursing Practice².

Funding was allocated for new service developments of neurology services in 2025, including 22 new nursing posts to support neurology services in the locations outlined below.

Neurology Sub initiative 2025	Location	Grade	WTE
Neurology Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS)	Letterkenny University	Clinical Nurse Specialist (General)	1
	Mayo University	Clinical Nurse Specialist (General)	1
	MRH Portlaoise	Clinical Nurse Specialist (General)	1
	Our Lady of Lourdes	Clinical Nurse Specialist (General)	1
	UH Kerry	Clinical Nurse Specialist (General)	1
	Wexford General	Clinical Nurse Specialist (General)	1
Headache Clinic	Tallaght University	Advanced Nurse Practitioner (General)	1
	UH Limerick	Advanced Nurse Practitioner (General)	1
	Sligo University	Clinical Nurse Specialist (General)	1
Movement disorders/Parkinson's disease	Mater Misericordiae University	Advanced Nurse Practitioner (General)	1
	St. Vincent's University	Advanced Nurse Practitioner (General)	1
	Tallaght University	Advanced Nurse Practitioner (General)	1
	Beaumont	Clinical Nurse Specialist (General)	1
	Cork University	Clinical Nurse Specialist (General)	1
	Galway University	Clinical Nurse Specialist (General)	1
	UH Waterford	Clinical Nurse Specialist (General)	1
Epilepsy	St. Vincent's University	Advanced Nurse Practitioner (General)	1
	UH Waterford	Advanced Nurse Practitioner (General)	1
Other			
Multiple Sclerosis	Galway University	Advanced Nurse Practitioner (General)	1
Rare Neurological Diseases	Tallaght University	Clinical Nurse Specialist (General)	1
Neuromuscular	Beaumont	Clinical Nurse Specialist (General)	1
Neurogenetics	Mater Misericordiae University	Clinical Nurse Specialist (General)	1
Neurology Nurse Allocation - Total			22

Number of consultant neurologists

Table 1 below sets out the neurology consultant WTE grouped by Hospital Group/Health Regions. Because this figure does not change frequently, we have reported for 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024 by Hospital Groups and by Hospital Regions for 2025 time points³.

The data in Tables 1 and 2 below have been extracted from DIME (Doctors Integrated Management E-system) as of 31st December 2019 - 2024. As DIME is a live system, it is essential to note that there may be variances in the figures published, depending on the report run date, as entries can be made with a retrospective date.



Table 1: Total Consultant Neurologists at each year from 2019 - 2024, by Hospital Group/CHO, Headcount and WTE

Hospital Group/CHO	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023		2024	
	Headcount	WTE	Headcount	WTE	Headcount	WTE	Headcount	WTE	Headcount	WTE	Headcount	WTE
Dublin Midlands Hospitals Group	9		11	9.72	12	10.72	13	12.22	17	14	18	15.50
Ireland East Hospitals Group	12	9	10	8.5	11	8.5	12	11.5	14	13	14	13
RCSI Hospitals Group	11	7.65	11	8.15	11	8.82	11	7.82	12	8.86	13	10.36
Saolta Hospitals Group	5	5	6	6	6	6	8	8	9	8.48	10	9.48
South / South West Hospitals Group	8	7.21	8	7.21	8	7.21	9	8.21	9	9	12	12
University of Limerick Hospitals Group	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	4	4	3	4	4
Total	47	37.81	48	41.58	50	43.25	57	51.75	65	56.34	71	64.34

Table 2: Total Consultant Neurologist Posts vacant at 31st December 2024 by Hospital Group/CHO

Dublin Midlands Hospitals Group	2	2
Ireland East Hospitals Group	1	1
Saolta Hospitals Group	1	1
South / South West Hospitals Group	2	2
Total	6	6

I trust this information is of assistance to you, but should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Anne Horgan
General Manager

References

1. <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/clinical-strategy-and-programmes/neurology-model-of-care.pdf>
2. <https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/a-policy-on-the-development-of-graduate-to-advanced-nursing-and-midwife-practice.pdf>
3. NDTP Ref: DS20/25