

**Príomhoifigeach Daoine**

Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhísí
Sláinte Ospidéal Dr. Steevens',
Baile Átha Cliath 8, D08 W2A8

Chief People Officer

Health Service Executive,
Dr Steevens' Hospital,
Dublin 8, D08 W2A8

www.hse.ie
@hselive

t 01 635 2319
e nationalhr@hse.ie

Mr. Colm Burke, TD

01 October 2025

Re: PQ 45632/25 – To ask the Minister for Health the timeline of when she expects to see a comprehensive roll out of a full 7-day roster the hospital network; when she envisages waiting lists can be sufficiently addressed without the need for insourcing and outsourcing initiatives; the additional number of healthcare staff required to achieve full capacity in the health service; and if she will make a statement on the matter. – Colm Burke

Dear Deputy,

I refer to your recent parliamentary questions above which were forwarded to the Health Services Executive (HSE) by the Department of Health for direct reply.

The HSE is committed to a consistent application of 5/7 working throughout all public health services to meet the needs of our service users. The initial 2 points of focus have been:

1. Patient Flow across acute and community care.
2. Expansion of Scheduled Care into evenings and Saturday hours.

The HSE will continue to track progress on the developments and expansion of 5/7 working and will gather data for the purpose of analysis and the building of a body of evidence which demonstrates continuous improvement in service provision. In this regard, an initial HSE / DOH workshop was held on September of this year, with a follow up workshop scheduled for January 2026.

To support the provision of health care services across the entire week, the Public Only Consultant Contract (POCC), was implemented in March 2023. An important objective of this contract was to increase on site presence of senior clinical decision makers into the evening times and weekends. Approximately 64% of consultants working in the public health sector have signed POCC. These Consultant are required to agree a clear work schedule which supports and aligns with the needs of the service, including working to support both Patient Flow and Scheduled Care improvement.

The HSE, with the health service staff representative bodies, have also agreed an Extended Working Day/Week Framework to enable Services to move to 5/7 working to meet service user needs, facilitate a smoother patient flow and greater levels of discharge to all parts of the healthcare system over a 7 day week. Information on the Framework can be accessed [here](#).

Outsourcing:

In 2021 the Government commenced a revised approach to the issue of scheduled care. The Waiting List Action Plan (WLAP) initiated in September 2021 focused on sustainably reducing and reforming hospital waiting lists and waiting times. The plan adopted a multi-annual approach, involving both short-term measures to increase capacity and longer-term reforms for sustainable change. Medium to longer term measures include the introduction of surgical hubs, the plans for elective only hospitals and workforce reform. The immediate short term plans included efforts to reduce the number of patients waiting beyond the Sláintecare targets (10 weeks for OPD, 12 weeks for IPDC and GI Scopes)

There are significant programmes underway to deal with various aspects of reform (capital, elective hospital, surgical hubs, modernised care pathways, contract reform POCC, workforce reform 5/7, technology, affordability, enhanced community care, healthy population/prevention, protection). The HSE already has agreed in principle with the Department of Health and Minister to introduce central referral mechanisms for all Outpatient Department

(OPD) referrals. This is in place in some specialties in some sites and is now currently being considered for full implementation in the coming months.

This information is extracted from the following document:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-health/publications/minister-for-health-publishes-insourcing-and-outsourcing-report-a-review-hse-june-2025/>

I trust this is of some assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Catriona McConnellogue
National HR