

Anaesthesia

Table 1.1 outlines the current number and ratio of consultant anaesthetists per 100,000 of the population in Ireland. Included in this table are the projected numbers of specialists per 100,000 of the population in 2024, should the current ratio remain static at the 2014 level. Table 1.1 also includes the research informed range of specialists per head of population as per expert stakeholder perspectives, the Hanly (2003) recommendations and the ratios in place, projected and/or recommended in comparable healthcare jurisdictions.

Table 1.1 Anaesthesia Consultant Posts (Private and Public) 2014-2024

2014		2024*		Research informed range of specialists per head of population to 2024 **	
N	Ratio per 100,000 pop	N	Ratio per 100,000 pop	N	Ratio per 100,000 pop
432 (396 WTE)	9.3	465 (426 WTE)	9.3	548-747 (504-687 WTEs)	11 - 15

* Accounting for population growth and an unchanged ratio of consultants

** The recommendation is based on information in Table 1.2 and represents a range from the lowest to the highest ratio considered

Table 1.2

Hanly (2003)	Hanly (2003) recommended a ratio of 1: 8,300 consultant anaesthetists per head of population to achieve a consultant-provided service and to comply with the European Working Time Directive (EWTD) by 2013. This represents approximately 12 consultants per 100,000 of the population including those working in anaesthesia, intensive care, paediatric anaesthesia and pain management. Using CSO population projections (CSO, 2011), we estimate the recommended ratio to equate to 557 consultant anaesthetists today and approximately 600 consultant anaesthetists in 2024 approximately. Using a WTE rate of .92, this would equate to 512 and 552 whole-time equivalent (WTE) consultants in 2014 and 2024 respectively.
The College of Anaesthetists of Ireland (CAI)/Clinical Programme	The College of Anaesthetists of Ireland (CAI) refer to Hanly (2003) in advising that the current figure of 8.8 per 100,000 is insufficient to allow for the introduction of the European Working Time Directive (citing Hanly as recommending a figure of 11 per 100,000 – see note below). Reference is made to the UK workforce and it is suggested that a ratio of 15 consultants per 100,000 of the population is a more realistic solution to cope with the 24/7 demands of the profession. This is the functioning ratio of Northern Ireland where service delivery is largely consultant-provided and much less dependent on NCHDs. If Ireland was to move to staffing levels similar to Northern Ireland, 692 consultants would be needed at present, rising to 726 in 2020. The College of Anaesthetists of Ireland (CAI) advise that they are currently training sufficient numbers (30 per annum) to staff the Irish health service at a level of 11 per 100,000. However, this is assuming that a steady-state has been reached with regard to consultant numbers and that most CAI trainees will opt to stay in Ireland after training. Neither is the case at present according to the CAI which suggests that there is scope to train up to 40 trainees per year to facilitate achieving 11 consultants per 100,000 of the population in a timely manner. This is on the condition that no increase in training numbers should occur without an increase in consultant numbers.
United Kingdom	There are approximately 14 consultant anaesthetists per 100,000 of the population in the United Kingdom. The Director of the Royal College of Anaesthetists (RCOA) advised that this ratio arises out of taking the population as 63,776,000 and the number of consultants as 9,000 as per 2010 census data. The Royal College of Anaesthetists does not produce a recommended number of anaesthetists per head of population.
Australia	The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2014) estimate that there were 3,519

	specialists working in anaesthesia in 2012 (whereby anaesthesia was their main specialism). This equates to a ratio of 15.5 per 100,000 of the population for 2012 (the population of Australia in 2012 was 22.68 million).
--	---

Notes:

- Anaesthesia: 375 specialists were employed in the public sector (excluding specified purpose contract employees and those on career breaks). Source: HSE Workforce Planning, Analysis, & Informatics Unit, Dec 2013
- Anaesthesia: 57 specialists were estimated to be employed in the private sector. Source: Medical Directory; Google and hospital websites
- WTE rate used herein is .92. Source: HSE Workforce Planning, Analysis, & Informatics Unit, Dec 2013
- Population 2014 is projected to be 4,626,423 using the M2F2 scenario CSO (2011)
- Population 2024 is projected to be 4,979,921 using the M2F2 scenario CSO (2011)
- Information in Table 1.2 does not necessarily represent the views of HSE-NDTP