



Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Quarterly Workforce Statistics 31 December 2023



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Máinnstríe O Poustie

www.health-ni.gov.uk



NISRA

Northern Ireland
Statistics and Research Agency
Gníomhaireacht Thuaisceart Éireann
um Staitisticí agus Taighde

INFORMATION
ANALYSIS
DIRECTORATE



Contents

| | Page |
|---------------------------------|------|
| Introduction and Background | 2 |
| Key Points | 2 |
| Overall Workforce (WTE) | 3 |
| by Staff Group | 3 |
| by Regional HSC Trust | 5 |
| by Other HSC Organisations | 6 |
| by Pay Band | 8 |
| Annex 1: Key Data Tables | 9 |
| Technical Notes and Definitions | 14 |
| Quality Assessment | 16 |

Introduction and Background

This bulletin presents statistics on the size of the Health and Social Care (HSC) workforce in Northern Ireland as at 31 December 2023. Statistics by Staff Group and HSC organisation are presented throughout. More detailed information on the size and nature of the HSC workforce is available in the annual [HSC Workforce Census](#) report on the Department of Health website.

All data used in this bulletin have been extracted from the Human Resources, Payroll, Travel and Subsistence System (HRPTS) which is maintained by the various HSC organisations. To ensure that the Department's information is accurate, high data quality standards need to be achieved and maintained by all HSC organisations.

The data presented excludes domiciliary care staff, bank/sessional staff, Out-of-Hours GPs, staff with a WTE of less than or equal to 0.03, staff on career breaks and Chairs/Members of Boards. Included are students who were employed to assist medical and nursing staff during the Covid-19 pandemic. Staff group is derived from the first digit of Job Code description and denotes the occupational family of the Job.

The data accompanying this bulletin are available of the [Department of Health](#) website.

Key Points

- At 31 December 2023, the Health and Social Care (HSC) Northern Ireland workforce stood at 65,714 whole-time equivalent (WTE), an increase from 31 December 2022 of 2.1% (1,330 WTE).
- There were 74,520 active posts in HSC in Northern Ireland, filled by 73,754 individuals.
- Just over a quarter of the HSC workforce at 31 December 2023 was in the Registered Nursing & Midwifery staff group (17,651 WTE, 26.9%). This staff group has seen an increase of 3.2% (542 WTE) from 31 December 2022, and an increase of 15.8% (2,403 WTE) since 31 December 2018.
- The Belfast HSC Trust had the largest workforce, with 19,021 WTE at 31 December 2023. This level is 1.6% higher than at 31 December 2022, and 6.1% higher than at 31 December 2018. All regional HSC Trusts have seen an increase in WTE staff since 31 December 2018.
- At 31 December 2023, over a third of the HSC workforce were employed at AfC pay bands 6 and above (36.3%), 34.7% employed at pay bands 1-4, 21.4% employed at pay band 5 and 7.7% employed in non-AfC grades.

Contact

For further information regarding this statistical bulletin, please contact:

Information & Analysis Directorate,
Department of Health,
Room 11, Annex 2, Castle Buildings,
Stormont Estate,
Belfast, BT4 3SQ

Telephone: 028 9052 2493
E-mail: [Workforce Statistics](#)

This bulletin presents the Quarterly Workforce Statistics in a new format and we would appreciate any comments or feedback, which can be sent to the responsible statistician, Joanne Hughes, at the e-mail address above.

WTE definition: The Whole Time Equivalent number of staff is calculated by aggregating the total number of hours that staff in a grade are contracted to work, and dividing by the standard hours for that grade. In this way, part-time staff are converted into an equivalent number of 'whole-time' staff.

Active posts definition: The number of posts filled by permanent or temporary staff. Staff may work in one or more post, for example part-time roles in more than one location, staff group or grade. In publications presenting data prior to 31 December 2022, this was referred to as 'Headcount'.

Headcount definition: The number of individuals working in active posts. This counts individuals only once, regardless of how many posts they hold. This definition applies to publications presenting data from 31 December 2022 onwards.

Overall Workforce

At 31 December 2023, there were 65,714 WTE staff employed¹ across 74,520 active posts in Health and Social Care (HSC) in Northern Ireland. There was an individual headcount of 73,754. 756 staff held more than one active post.

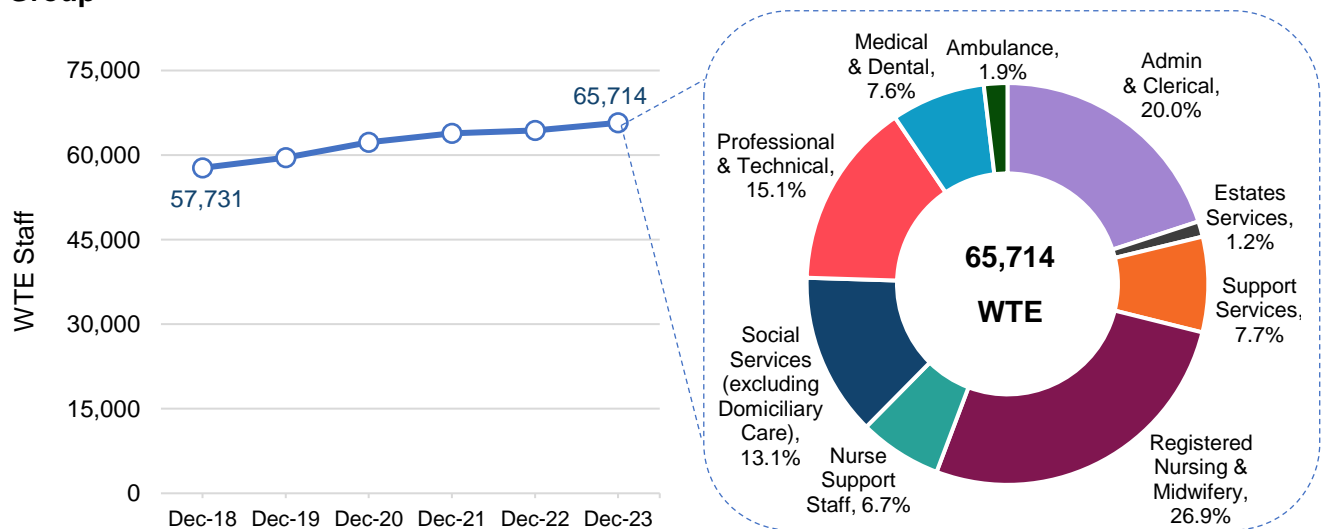
All comparisons and analysis hereafter refer to WTE.

Staff Group

Figure 1 below shows that between 31 December 2018 and 31 December 2023, the HSC workforce increased by 7,983 WTE (13.8%). The annual increase from 31 December 2022 was 1,330 WTE (2.1%).

Just over a quarter of the HSCNI workforce at 31 December 2023 was in the Registered Nursing & Midwifery staff group (17,651 WTE, 26.9%). The Administration and Clerical staff group accounted for a further fifth of the workforce (13,123 WTE, 20.0%).

Figure 1: Overall HSCNI Workforce (WTE), 31 December 2018 – 31 December 2023, by Staff Group



¹ Subject to the exclusions described in the Technical Notes (page 14).

Figure 2 below shows the annual and five-year percentage change in WTE for each staff group.

Annual Change (31 December 2022 to 31 December 2023)

The annual change in workforce varied across the staff groups.

The annual rate of change ranged from a high of 3.8% in the Social Services workforce (317 WTE) to -5.3% in the Ambulance workforce (-69 WTE).

With 542 more WTE staff, the Registered Nursing & Midwifery workforce experienced the largest annual increase in staff numbers.

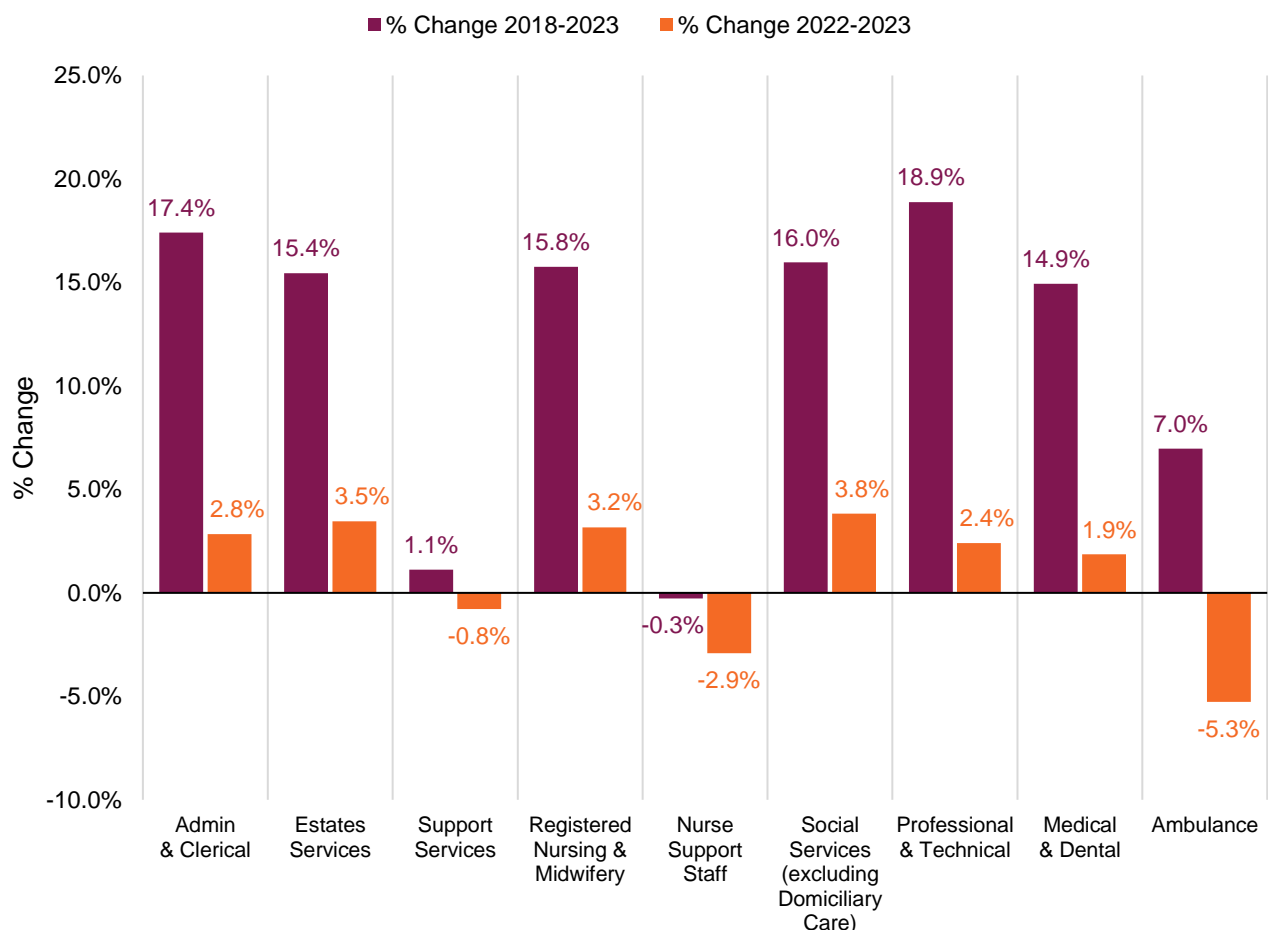
Five-Year Change (31 December 2018 to 31 December 2023)

All staff groups, with the exception of Nurse Support, have seen an increase in their workforce since 31 December 2018.

The five-year rate of increase was greatest in the Professional & Technical staff group, with an increase of 18.9% (1,570 WTE).

With an increase of 2,403 WTE, the largest increase in the number of WTE staff over the five-year period was in the Registered Nursing & Midwifery staff group (15.8%).

Figure 2: Percentage Change in HSCNI Workforce (WTE) by Staff Group, 31 December 2018 – 31 December 2023

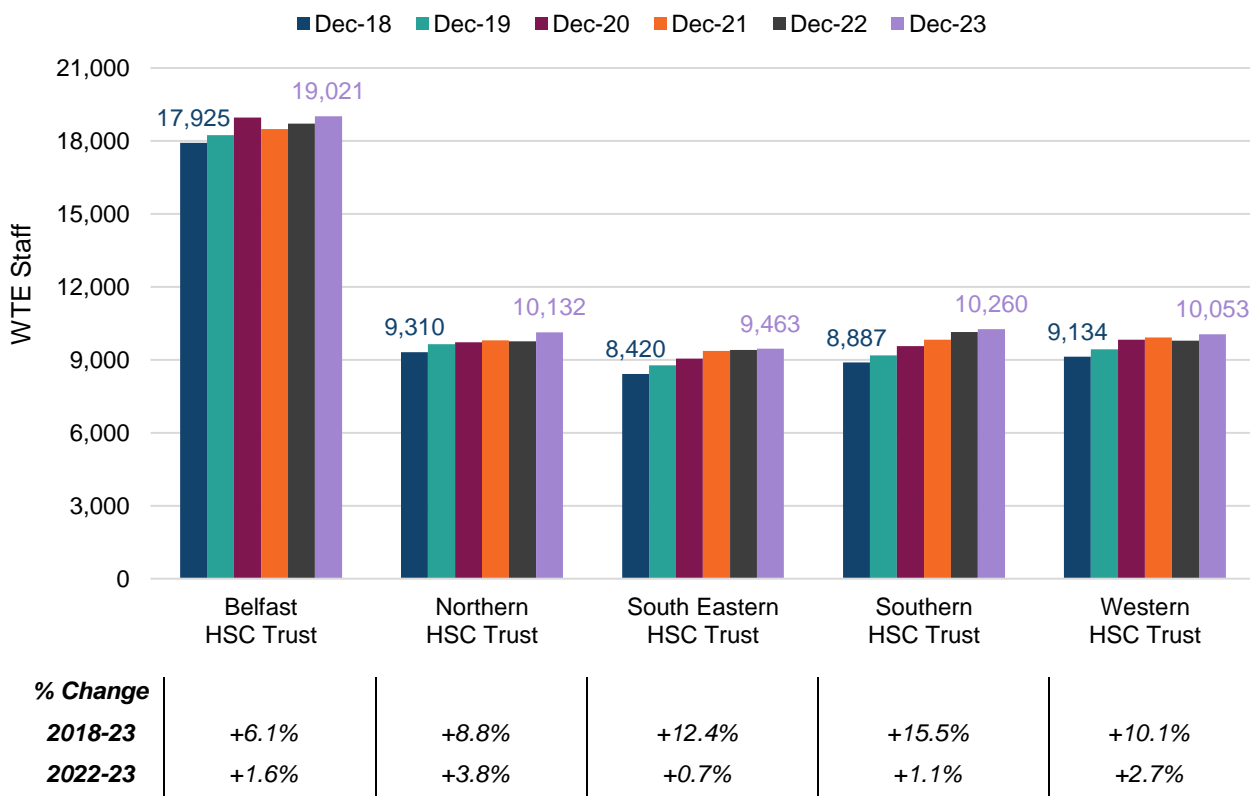


Regional HSC Trust

Figure 3 shows the number of WTE staff employed in each regional HSC Trust at 31 December each year since 2018. These figures exclude Doctors in Training employed by the Northern Ireland Medical & Dental Training Agency (NIMDTA) under the single lead employer initiative. This initiative was introduced in August 2019 and all hospital-based training programmes were phased over to the new employment relationship with NIMDTA by December 2021. Page 7 provides information on Doctors in Training by HSC Trust area.

The Belfast HSC Trust had the largest workforce, with 19,021 WTE at 31 December 2023. This level is 1.6% higher than at 31 December 2022, and 6.1% higher than at 31 December 2018. All regional HSC Trusts have seen an increase in WTE staff since 31 December 2018, the most notable being the Southern and South Eastern HSC Trusts with a 15.5% and 12.4% WTE increase respectively.

Figure 3: HSCNI Workforce (WTE) by Regional HSC Trust, 31 December 2018 – 31 December 2023



Other HSC Organisations

Figure 4 below shows the breakdown of staff in each HSC organisation at 31 December 2023.

Figure 4: HSCNI Workforce (WTE) by Other HSC Organisation, 31 December 2023

| | WTE | % Change | |
|--|-------|----------|---------|
| | | 2018-23 | 2022-23 |
| NI Medical and Dental Training Agency | 2,074 | +854.4% | +2.1% |
| Business Services Organisation | 1,965 | +36.0% | +10.4% |
| NI Ambulance Service | 1,449 | +16.1% | -3.3% |
| Strategic Planning & Performance Group | 494 | +14.7% | +0.4% |
| Public Health Agency | 356 | +17.4% | +4.5% |
| NI Blood Transfusion Service | 158 | +0.2% | 0.0% |
| Regulation & Quality Improvement Authority | 127 | +14.3% | +5.3% |
| NI Social Care Council | 60 | +26.9% | +2.7% |
| Children's Court Guardian Agency for NI ^ | 58 | +2.1% | 0.0% |
| Patient Client Council | 31 | +35.8% | +10.0% |
| NI Practice & Education Council | 13 | -8.5% | +4.4% |

^ Formerly known as the Northern Ireland Agency for Guardian Ad Litem Agency (NIGALA).

At 2,074 WTE staff, NIMDTA had the largest number of staff across the other HSC organisations. NIMDTA has also seen the largest increase (854.4%) in their workforce in the past five years. This is due to the phased introduction of the single lead employer initiative in August 2019, when NIMDTA became the single employer for Doctors in Training rather than individual HSC Trusts.

Figure 5 below shows a breakdown of staff employed by NIMDTA. Of the 2,074 WTE staff employed, 83.4% (1,730 WTE) were working in one of the five regional HSC Trusts as Doctors in Training. The remaining 16.6% (344 WTE) included Doctors in Training working in other HSC organisations, GP trainees, GP educators, and administrative staff.

Figure 5: NI Medical & Dental Training Agency Workforce (WTE), 31 December 2023

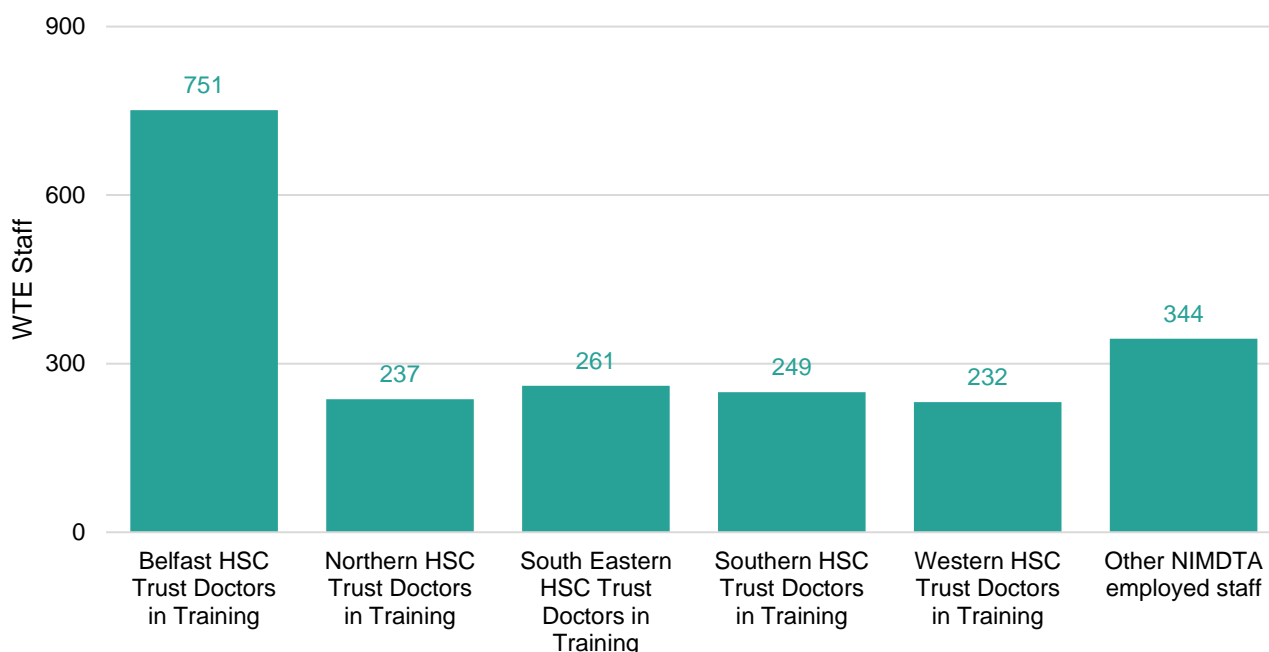


Table 1 below illustrates the impact of including these Doctors in Training in the workforce figures for each regional HSC Trust. It should be noted that the inclusion of these figures in Trusts workforce would result in greater increases than those reported in Figure 3.

Table 1: NIMDTA Employed Doctors in Training Working in Regional HSC Trusts, 31 December 2023

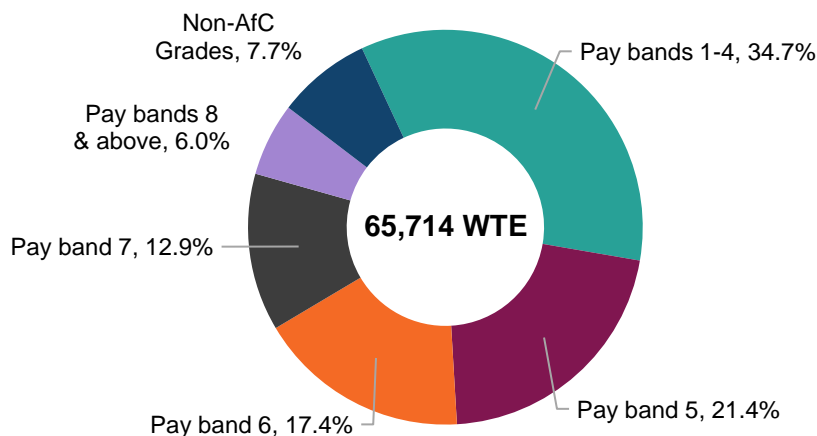
| Regional HSC Trust | Staff Employed by a Regional HSC Trust (WTE) | NIMDTA Employed Doctors in Training working in a Regional HSC Trust (WTE) | Total* WTE Working in a Regional HSC Trust |
|----------------------|--|---|--|
| Belfast | 19,021 | 751 | 19,773 |
| Northern | 10,132 | 237 | 10,368 |
| South Eastern | 9,463 | 261 | 9,724 |
| Southern | 10,260 | 249 | 10,509 |
| Western | 10,053 | 232 | 10,284 |

* Rows may not sum due to rounding.

Pay Band

Figure 6 below shows the breakdown of the HSCNI workforce by pay band at 31 December 2023. At 31 December 2023, over a third of the HSCNI workforce were employed at Agenda for Change (AfC) pay bands 6 and above (36.3%), 34.7% employed at pay bands 1-4, 21.4% employed at pay band 5 and 7.7% employed in non-AfC grades. The current [AfC pay scales](#) are available on the Department of Health website.

Figure 6: HSCNI Workforce (WTE) by Pay Band, 31 December 2023



Staff employed in non-AfC grades are mainly Medical & Dental staff (97.6%), with the remaining 2.4% employed across Administration & Clerical, Support Services, Registered Nursing & Midwifery, Social Services, and Professional & Technical staff groups.

Table 2 below presents the percentage breakdown of each staff group by pay band groups. The table shows that just over half (50.8%) of Registered Nursing & Midwifery staff were employed at pay band 5 (the starting pay band for registered nurses and midwives). Almost two thirds (63.1%) of Administration & Clerical staff were employed at pay bands 1-4.

Table 2: HSCNI Workforce (WTE) by Staff Group and Pay Band Group, 31 December 2023*

| Staff Group | Pay bands 1-4 | Pay band 5 | Pay bands 6 & above | Non-AfC Grades | Total WTE |
|--|---------------|--------------|---------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Administration & Clerical | 63.1% | 11.1% | 25.0% | 0.9% | 13,123 |
| Estates Services | 35.5% | 23.7% | 40.8% | 0.0% | 817 |
| Support Services | 98.5% | 0.6% | 0.8% | 0.0% | 5,038 |
| Registered Nursing & Midwifery | 0.0% | 50.8% | 49.2% | 0.0% | 17,651 |
| Nursing & Midwifery Support | 100.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 4,380 |
| Social Services (excl. Domiciliary Care) | 29.4% | 19.1% | 51.5% | 0.0% | 8,600 |
| Professional & Technical | 20.2% | 14.6% | 65.2% | 0.0% | 9,891 |
| Medical & Dental | 0.7% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 99.3% | 4,973 |
| Ambulance | 24.2% | 25.1% | 50.7% | 0.0% | 1,242 |
| All HSC | 34.7% | 21.4% | 36.3% | 7.7% | 65,714 |

* Rows may not sum due to rounding.

Annex 1: Key Data Tables

Table A1: HSC Workforce (WTE, Active Posts, Individuals with Multiple Posts, and Headcount), 31 December 2018 – 31 December 2023

| Count | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| WTE | 57,730.8 | 59,549.9 | 62,248.4 | 63,874.3 | 64,383.7 | 65,714.0 |
| Active Posts | 66,281 | 68,222 | 71,152 | 72,731 | 73,161 | 74,520 |
| Individuals with multiple posts | 903 | 866 | 844 | 845 | 772 | 756 |
| Headcount | 65,359 | 67,344 | 70,293 | 71,874 | 72,376 | 73,754 |

Table A2: HSC Workforce (WTE) by Staff Group, 31 December 2018 – 31 December 2023

| Staff Group | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | % Change 2018-23 | % Change 2022-23 |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Administration & Clerical | 11,177.1 | 11,586.0 | 12,116.6 | 12,687.2 | 12,761.6 | 13,122.8 | 17.4% | 2.8% |
| Estates Services | 707.9 | 753.3 | 772.6 | 799.5 | 789.9 | 817.2 | 15.4% | 3.5% |
| Support Services | 4,982.1 | 5,004.4 | 5,222.9 | 5,191.9 | 5,077.7 | 5,037.6 | 1.1% | -0.8% |
| Registered Nursing & Midwifery | 15,247.5 | 15,540.0 | 16,122.2 | 16,556.0 | 17,109.2 | 17,650.7 | 15.8% | 3.2% |
| Nurse Support Staff | 4,391.6 | 4,392.4 | 4,538.3 | 4,588.7 | 4,510.8 | 4,379.6 | -0.3% | -2.9% |
| Social Services (excluding Domiciliary Care) | 7,416.4 | 7,769.6 | 8,074.0 | 8,243.0 | 8,283.1 | 8,600.4 | 16.0% | 3.8% |
| Professional & Technical | 8,320.2 | 8,818.6 | 9,342.5 | 9,566.2 | 9,658.2 | 9,890.7 | 18.9% | 2.4% |
| Medical & Dental | 4,327.1 | 4,471.9 | 4,761.6 | 4,890.5 | 4,882.4 | 4,973.1 | 14.9% | 1.9% |
| Ambulance | 1,160.9 | 1,213.6 | 1,297.9 | 1,351.2 | 1,310.8 | 1,241.8 | 7.0% | -5.3% |
| Total | 57,730.8 | 59,549.9 | 62,248.4 | 63,874.3 | 64,383.7 | 65,714.0 | 13.8% | 2.1% |

Table A3: HSC Workforce (WTE) by HSC Organisation, 31 December 2018 – 31 December 2023

| Staff Group | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | % Change 2018-23 | % Change 2022-23 |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Belfast HSC Trust | 17,925.4 | 18,236.8 | 18,969.4 | 18,489.3 | 18,712.5 | 19,021.2 | 6.1% | 1.6% |
| Northern HSC Trust | 9,310.1 | 9,638.2 | 9,723.3 | 9,799.1 | 9,757.4 | 10,131.6 | 8.8% | 3.8% |
| South Eastern HSC Trust | 8,420.4 | 8,779.6 | 9,054.3 | 9,359.9 | 9,399.2 | 9,462.9 | 12.4% | 0.7% |
| Southern HSC Trust | 8,887.1 | 9,185.3 | 9,566.0 | 9,830.0 | 10,148.3 | 10,260.1 | 15.5% | 1.1% |
| Western HSC Trust | 9,133.8 | 9,434.5 | 9,830.3 | 9,913.9 | 9,788.6 | 10,052.8 | 10.1% | 2.7% |
| NI Ambulance Service HSC Trust | 1,247.5 | 1,317.3 | 1,426.5 | 1,502.9 | 1,498.8 | 1,448.9 | 16.1% | -3.3% |
| Business Services Organisation | 1,444.6 | 1,483.3 | 1,485.1 | 1,660.2 | 1,779.5 | 1,964.9 | 36.0% | 10.4% |
| Strategic Planning & Performance Group [note 1] | 430.5 | 452.8 | 456.7 | 477.5 | 491.5 | 493.7 | 14.7% | 0.4% |
| NI Blood Transfusion Service | 157.5 | 156.4 | 156.5 | 155.2 | 157.8 | 157.7 | 0.2% | 0.0% |
| Children's Court Guardian Agency for NI [note 2] | 57.2 | 57.8 | 60.7 | 61.3 | 58.4 | 58.4 | 2.1% | 0.0% |
| NI Medical and Dental Training Agency | 217.3 | 313.7 | 924.9 | 1,914.1 | 2,030.6 | 2,073.9 | 854.4% | 2.1% |
| NI Practice & Education Council | 14.6 | 15.6 | 12.6 | 12.0 | 12.8 | 13.4 | -8.5% | 4.4% |
| NI Social Care Council | 47.6 | 50.8 | 53.6 | 52.2 | 58.8 | 60.4 | 26.9% | 2.7% |
| Patient Client Council | 22.8 | 21.3 | 23.6 | 24.0 | 28.1 | 30.9 | 35.8% | 10.0% |
| Public Health Agency | 303.6 | 299.4 | 399.8 | 514.5 | 340.9 | 356.4 | 17.4% | 4.5% |
| Regulation & Quality Improvement Authority | 110.9 | 107.0 | 105.3 | 108.2 | 120.4 | 126.8 | 14.3% | 5.3% |
| Total | 57,730.8 | 59,549.9 | 62,248.4 | 63,874.3 | 64,383.7 | 65,714.0 | 13.8% | 2.1% |

Note 1: Former HSC Board staff have undertaken their functions from 1 April 2022 as part of the Department of Health's newly formed Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG). For consistency purposes, vacancies actively being recruited in SPPG are included in these data tables, and noted as SPPG.

Note 2: The Children's Court Guardian Agency for Northern Ireland (CCGANI) was formerly known as the Northern Ireland Agency for Guardian Ad Litem Agency (NIGALA).

Table A4: HSC Workforce (WTE) by Regional HSC Trust & Staff Group, 31 December 2023

| Regional HSC Trust | Administration & Clerical | Estates Services | Support Services | Registered Nursing & Midwifery | Nursing & Midwifery Support Staff | Social Services (excl. Domiciliary Care) | Professional & Technical | Medical & Dental [note 3] | Total |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Belfast HSC Trust | 3,332.7 | 256.3 | 1,698.9 | 5,597.4 | 1,458.6 | 2,047.9 | 3,545.1 | 1,084.3 | 19,021.2 |
| Northern HSC Trust | 1,754.8 | 163.3 | 778.1 | 2,878.2 | 693.0 | 1,820.8 | 1,649.8 | 393.5 | 10,131.6 |
| South Eastern HSC Trust | 1,571.6 | 103.5 | 863.9 | 2,868.1 | 636.6 | 1,555.3 | 1,383.7 | 480.2 | 9,462.9 |
| Southern HSC Trust | 1,815.0 | 139.5 | 607.6 | 3,130.6 | 773.1 | 1,646.5 | 1,633.2 | 514.5 | 10,260.1 |
| Western HSC Trust | 1,766.2 | 148.8 | 891.5 | 3,080.1 | 788.0 | 1,448.7 | 1,477.7 | 451.8 | 10,052.8 |
| Regional Trusts Total | 10,240.3 | 811.4 | 4,840.1 | 17,554.5 | 4,349.2 | 8,519.1 | 9,689.4 | 2,924.4 | 58,928.6 |

Note 3: Includes 109.6 WTE classed as Dental staff.

Table A5: HSC Workforce (WTE) by Other HSC Trusts/Organisations and Staff Group, 31 December 2023

| Other HSC Trusts/Organisations | Administration & Clerical | Estates Services | Support Services | Registered Nursing & Midwifery | Nursing & Midwifery Support Staff | Social Services (excl. Domiciliary Care) | Professional & Technical | Medical & Dental [note 4] | Ambulance | Total |
|--|---------------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| NI Ambulance Service | 166.6 | [s] | 33.9 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | [s] | [s] | 1,241.8 | 1,448.9 |
| Business Services Organisation | 1,695.4 | [s] | 157.3 | 39.2 | 0.0 | [s] | 70.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1,964.9 |
| Strategic Planning & Performance Group [note 1] | 391.0 | [s] | [s] | [s] | 0.0 | 31.6 | 44.7 | 21.6 | 0.0 | 493.7 |
| NI Blood Transfusion Service | 42.0 | 0.0 | [s] | 10.9 | 30.4 | 0.0 | 64.4 | [s] | 0.0 | 157.7 |
| Children's Court Guardian Agency for NI [note 2] | 17.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 41.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 58.4 |
| NI Medical and Dental Training Agency | 86.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1,987.6 | 0.0 | 2,073.9 |
| NI Practice & Education Council | 5.8 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 7.6 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 13.4 |
| NI Social Care Council | 54.4 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 6.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 60.4 |
| Patient Client Council | 30.9 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 30.9 |
| Public Health Agency | 278.2 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 32.4 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 15.0 | 30.8 | 0.0 | 356.4 |
| Regulation & Quality Improvement Authority | 114.6 | 0.0 | 0.0 | [s] | 0.0 | [s] | [s] | [s] | 0.0 | 126.8 |
| Total | 2,882.6 | 5.8 | 197.5 | 96.2 | 30.4 | 81.3 | 201.2 | 2,048.7 | 1,241.8 | 6,785.4 |

[s] Where appropriate, cells containing very small numbers (values less than 4) have been suppressed to avoid issues involving personal disclosure. Where it may be possible to deduce a small cell value, a small number of neighbouring cells (values less than 6) have also been suppressed.

Note 1: Former HSC Board staff have undertaken their functions from 1 April 2022 as part of the Department of Health's newly formed Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG). For consistency purposes, vacancies actively being recruited in SPPG are included in these data tables, and noted as SPPG.

Note 2: The Children's Court Guardian Agency for Northern Ireland (CCGANI) was formerly known as the Northern Ireland Agency for Guardian Ad Litem Agency (NIGALA).

Note 4: Includes 32.0 WTE classed as Dental staff.

Table A6: HSC Workforce (% WTE) by Staff Group and Pay Band Group, 31 December 2023

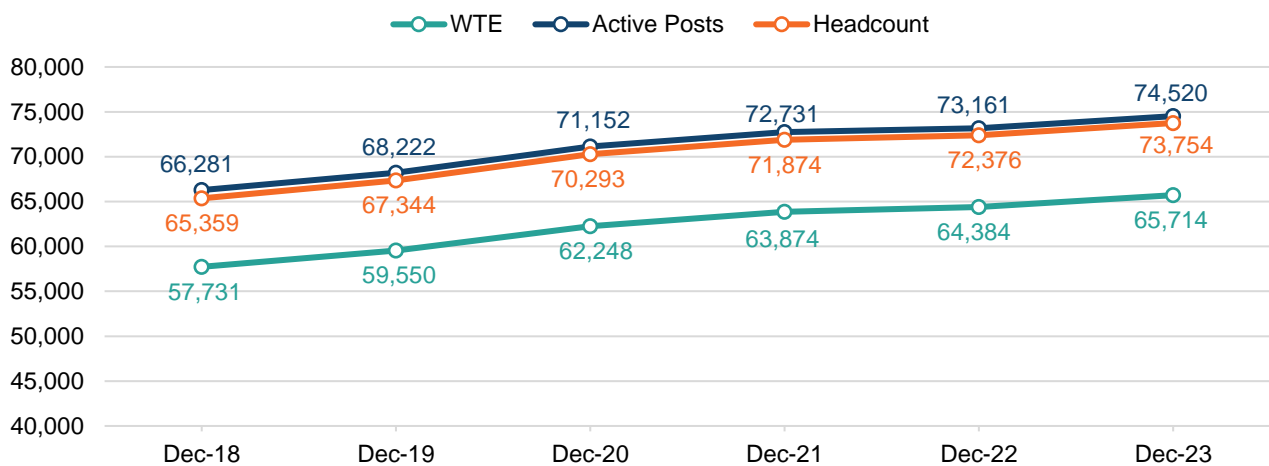
| Staff Group | Pay bands 1-4 | Pay band 5 | Pay bands 6 & above | Non-AfC Grades | Total WTE |
|--|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Administration & Clerical | 63.1% | 11.1% | 25.0% | 0.9% | 13,122.8 |
| Estates Services | 35.5% | 23.7% | 40.8% | 0.0% | 817.2 |
| Support Services | 98.5% | 0.6% | 0.8% | 0.0% | 5,037.6 |
| Registered Nursing & Midwifery | 0.0% | 50.8% | 49.2% | 0.0% | 17,650.7 |
| Nurse Support Staff | 100.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 4,379.6 |
| Social Services (excluding Domiciliary Care) | 29.4% | 19.1% | 51.5% | 0.0% | 8,600.4 |
| Professional & Technical | 20.2% | 14.6% | 65.2% | 0.0% | 9,890.7 |
| Medical & Dental | 0.7% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 99.3% | 4,973.1 |
| Ambulance | 24.2% | 25.1% | 50.7% | 0.0% | 1,241.8 |
| Total | 34.7% | 21.4% | 36.3% | 7.7% | 65,714.0 |

Technical Notes

Changes have been made to the way this HSCNI workforce information is analysed and presented on a quarterly basis. Due to some individuals being employed in more than one position in HSC, this quarterly statistical release will now include active posts (referred to as Headcount in publications presenting data prior to 31 December 2022) and individual headcount (see Definitions on page 15) as well as WTE, to provide a better understanding of the HSCNI workforce.

To show how this change impacts our understanding of the HSCNI workforce historically, Figure 7 below presents WTE, active posts and individual headcount at 31 December each year since 2018, and shows that the increasing trend in active posts is mirrored by headcount.

Figure 7: HSCNI Workforce (WTE, Active Posts, and Individual Headcount), 31 December 2018 – 31 December 2023



All data analyses in this report are based on whole time equivalents (WTE) unless otherwise stated.

HRPTS sourced workforce figures exclude staff on career breaks, bank staff (due to the variable nature of their employment), Chairs / Members of Boards, Out-of-Hours GPs, and staff with a whole-time equivalent of less than or equal to 0.03. The recorded whole-time equivalent for Domiciliary Care workers does not adequately reflect the full contribution of these staff, due to the variable hours of contracts. Domiciliary Care workers are therefore excluded from this analysis.

Figures include students employed to assist medical and nursing staff during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Staff group is derived from the first digit of Job Code description and denotes the occupational family of the Job. For analysis purposes, some positions have been recoded to different staff groups to ensure individuals cannot be identified e.g. Paramedic Practice Educators in HSC Trusts recoded from the Ambulance staff group to the Professional & Technical staff group.

Figures are based on administrative data for 31 December 2023 recorded on HRPTS, and extracted on 25 January 2024.

Former HSC Board staff have undertaken their functions from 1 April 2022 as part of the Department of Health's newly formed Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG). For consistency purposes, these former HSC Board staff continue to be part of this bulletin, and are noted as SPPG.

The Northern Ireland Agency for Guardian Ad Litem Agency (NIGALA) has been renamed to the Children's Court Guardian Agency for Northern Ireland. This change is effective from 6th March 2023.

Definitions

WTE: The Whole Time Equivalent number of staff is calculated by aggregating the total number of hours that staff in a grade are contracted to work, and dividing by the standard hours for that grade. In this way, part-time staff are converted into an equivalent number of 'whole-time' staff.

Active posts: The number of posts filled by permanent or temporary staff. Staff may work in one or more post, for example part-time roles in more than one location, staff group or grade. In publications presenting data prior to 31 December 2022, this was referred to as 'Headcount'.

Headcount: The number of individuals working in active posts. This counts individuals only once, regardless of how many posts they hold. This definition applies to publications presenting data from 31 December 2022 onwards.

Bank Staff: Staff utilised on an 'as and when required' basis who fill staffing shortfalls and maintain service delivery.

HSC: Umbrella term for all Health and Social Care NI Organisations

HRPTS: The Human Resources, Payroll, Travel and Subsistence Systems (HRPTS) which is maintained by the various HSC organisations.

Quality Assessment

Relevance

This publication provides a summary of the HSCNI workforce by broad staff groups and HSC organisation. The publication also includes five-year WTE trends of staff in post. The publication meets the needs of users in terms of trends in staff increases or decreases and the size and composition of staff groupings.

Accuracy and Reliability

Figures are an accurate summary of collated and processed HRPTS staff in post data at a point in time, given the exclusions listed in the publication. Whilst late recording of changes can occur, the data is expressed as the position for a given 'as at' date and downloads of the system are taken after the period of the payroll shutdown, which is when data processing for a given month is halted.

Once the figures are prepared for publication, internal quality assurance is carried out by Information and Analysis Directorate (IAD). The report is drafted and the figures in tabular and chart form are inserted into the report; at this point, further internal quality assurance is carried out by IAD to ensure the report matches the excel file.

Validation

IAD has some general quality checks for data mismatches or missing data, changes and trends are monitored, any anomalies are checked and followed up as appropriate with HSC organisations or the regional workforce information group. IAD cannot be responsible for input errors or late recording of data changes.

Error

HSC organisations are responsible for their own data and occasionally variance in recording practices can result in inconsistent data patterns across the region. The system is primarily designed to administer human resource information and to pay staff, therefore reporting capabilities are sometimes limited.

Revisions

IAD is committed to clarity around data revisions. As soon as possible after IAD ascertain that a correction to published data is necessary, all electronic documents containing the affected statistics on the DoH website will be updated and clearly marked with caveats and footnotes to detail any amendments. If the correction to the published data is minor, the necessary changes will be made by IAD without an announcement.

Timeliness and Punctuality

Downloads for this publication are based on the 31 December data extracts. These are taken around the third week of the following month, after the payroll shutdown period, with publication of the data in this bulletin around 7 weeks after the downloads.

Normal procedure is that twelve months advance notice of publications is given in the [IAD Statistical Releases Calendar](#) on the DoH website.

In the majority of cases, the target publication deadlines are met. However, in the event of a change to a pre-announced release date, the delay is announced, explained and updated regularly.

Accessibility and Clarity

The PDF report is accessible on the DoH Internet site via the Statistics section provided by Information and Analysis Directorate, and can be found under [staff numbers](#). The PDF report is published alongside MS Excel and CSV versions of the tables included in the report. The 24 hour pre-release list is published also. The report is not yet fully accessible for those using assistive technology.

Coherence and Comparability

IAD are not aware of other published data sources of HSC staff in post data. HSC organisations are of course able to produce their own analysis of their own organisation only, but this tends to be limited to Annual Reports or Accounts.

The data categories as presented in the report are comparable year-on-year and since the introduction of HRPTS, phased since 2013 but complete by 2014. Where data categorisation changes, this is noted.

Trade-offs between Output Quality Components

None

Assessment of User Needs and Perceptions

The publication will be used for a range of purposes by researchers and other users such as the NI Assembly and the DoH. IAD will ensure that the publication remains relevant to users' needs by taking on comments and feedback regularly. User feedback is invited in this publication. Readers are provided with contact details for the relevant statistician. We gain awareness of users of our data from ad hoc requests for information.

Performance, Cost and Respondent Burden

The publication represents a secondary use of the data and therefore adds no additional burden on health service organisations. The data are obtained from administrative systems within Northern Ireland.

Confidentiality, Transparency and Security

IAD have a data access agreement in place with each HSC organisation for access to a restricted set of data fields and reports. IAD are included in BSO communications about the system and also sit on the regional workforce information, analytics and reporting group with HSC organisations. The remit of this group is to discuss workforce information and regional reporting/analytics to promote consistency of reporting and to suggest improvements to the system. The group have the ability to raise Change Requests for system improvements where appropriate.

Data extracts from HRPTS do contain personal data such as national insurance number, personnel number and data of birth, and are at individual level but measures are in place to protect this data. However the publication tables are aggregate only and cell counts less than 5 are suppressed to lower the risk of personal identification.

Statisticians in IAD have restricted access to HRPTS reporting via secure access to this HSC system, using ID and password access. In addition, access to HRPTS is restricted to the specific IP addresses of the PCs used by the named statisticians. Following this, it is held on a network that is only accessible to the statisticians who need access.

The Code of Practice for Statistics is adhered to from data collection to publishing. DoH's 'Statistical Policy Statement on Confidentiality' can be found in the [Statistics Charter](#).