



Healthy Ireland



Future Health



Patient Safety First

What is the Taskforce on staffing and skill mix in nursing?

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The taskforce is a group of experts, chaired by Dr. Siobhan O' Halloran, Chief Nursing Officer, that will develop a framework to determine the staffing and skill mix requirements for the nursing workforce that take account of a number of influencing factors. Phase I will focus on developing a staffing and skill mix framework related to general and specialist adult hospital medical and surgical care settings. The Taskforce held its inaugural meeting on 23rd July 2014, and continue to meet twice monthly.

Why is the Taskforce needed?

The programme for Government (2011-2016) contains commitments for radical reform and restructuring of the health services in Ireland. The subject of nurse staffing has been a topic of discussion for a number of years, most notably since the publication of the Report of the Commission on Nursing (1998). Ensuring appropriate staffing and skill mix has been referenced in inquiries and investigations, demonstrated through research and is viewed by patients and their carers' as a key element in influencing the quality of care. Deciding on an optimal number of nurses is not an easy task. There is a delicate balance to be struck to meet economic, efficiency and patient safety requirements. Achieving this requires that relevant expertise be applied to the decision making process. The Taskforce will provide the expertise.

What are the aims of the Taskforce?

The main aim of the Taskforce is to contribute to the stabilisation of the nursing workforce. It will do this by developing a framework to determine the staffing and skill mix requirements for nursing in general and specialist adult hospital medical and surgical care settings (Phase I). Further phases will follow that will build on the learning from Phase I. The Taskforce will set out clearly the assumptions to underpin the framework, along with recommendations for implementation, monitoring and necessary education, training and guidance. Finally the Taskforce will present a written report to the Minister for Health in early 2015.

Getting involved – Consultation

Regional Meetings – Regional meetings are currently underway to inform and seek the opinions of our health service staff about the Taskforce and the underpinning assumptions to guide the development of the framework. To date consultations have taken place in Letterkenny, Galway, Cork, Dublin and Sligo. Further meetings are outlined below in the progress update section. In early 2015 further consultation will take place to seek feedback from our health service staff, on the Draft Framework.

Stakeholder Consultation – Consultation will also be taking place with specific stakeholder groups.

Individual Feedback – We welcome your views - submit by sending an email to: taskforceonstaffingandskillmix@health.gov.ie

You can also engage in consultation via an on-line survey at: <http://health.gov.ie/nursing-policy/taskforce-on-staffing-and-skill-mix-for-nursing/consultations>

Membership of the Taskforce

Chief Nursing Officer, Department of Health
Acute Hospitals Division, Department of Health & HSE
National Human Resources and Workforce Planning Division, Department of Health & National Human Resources HSE
Nursing and Midwifery Services Director, HSE
Clinical Lead and Nurse Lead Acute Medicine Programme, HSE
Nurse Lead Surgical Programme, HSE
Irish Association of Directors of Nursing and Midwifery
SIPTU and INMO
Nursing Academic and International Expertise

PROGRESS UPDATE

- **Presentations to the Taskforce:** A recent presentation was made by Dr Maria Schubert, international researcher, who provided key insights on Swiss research demonstrating the association between rationing of nursing care (i.e. care left undone) and its impact on patient outcome.
- **Dates for your diary : Forthcoming Regional Consultations - NO BOOKING REQUIRED**
 - 18th November, 10am to 12noon, Auditorium, Mater Hospital Dublin
 - 26th November, 10am to 12noon, Board Rooms 1a & 1b , Midland Regional Hospital, Tullamore