

INMO Q&A on the ballot

Tuesday 6th November 2018

What is this all about?

This is about safety. The HSE has not been able to recruit and retain enough nurses and midwives on these wages, so the health service is understaffed. The INMO is calling for action on pay to resolve this problem.

How do we know there is understaffing?

1. Between Dec 2017 and Sept 2018 (the latest figures), the number of staff nurses employed in the public health service has fallen by 227. In the long run, there are over 2,600 fewer nurses in 2018 than in 2007.
2. For every four HSE nursing jobs advertised, there is only one application.
3. The HSE is having such difficulty hiring staff, they pay recruitment firms €10,000 for every new nurse hired.

What difference does the number of nurses make?

Trials of safe staffing in Irish hospitals have revealed “significant” improvements in patient outcomes, decreased lengths of stay, fewer infections, reduced burnout and turnover of nurses, and up to 95% reduction in the use of agency staff. (Source: Department of Health, Framework for Safe Nurse Staffing, 2018)

What is the evidence of low pay?

At every increment, nurses and midwives’ pay is low for the public sector or health service, even for positions which do not require a third level degree, have fewer hours or require similar qualifications:

Grade	After 1 year	After 5 years	After 10 years	After 15 years
Staff Nurse	€30,802	€36,023	€42,644	€45,248
Garda (after Oct 2013)	€31,382	€41,495	€47,793	€49,512
Radiographer	€35,869	€40,850	€46,284	€49,544
Respiratory Technician	€37,052	€42,936	€49,355	€52,843
Occupational Therapist, Physio, Speech & Lang Therapist	€37,410	€42,539	€48,114	€51,543
Teacher (after 2011)	€37,430	€42,261	€49,999	€58,081

Internationally: The hourly rate for new nurses in Ireland is 29% lower than the USA, 27% lower than Canada, 26% lower than Australia, and 19% lower than London (2017 figures, adjusted for PPP).

Market rates: Agencies are paying higher wages to attract nurses to work in the public sector. Xtra Nursing agency offers 44% higher wages to newly-qualified nurses and midwives and guarantees at least 20% higher rates than the public sector. Scottish Nursing Guild also offers 20% higher rates.

What is the INMO seeking?

The INMO wants a safe, properly staffed health service. The only way to expand capacity and recruit sufficient nurses and midwives is to increase pay. This can be done without knock-on claims to other sectors under Clause 3 of the Public Service Stability Agreement, to which the INMO is a signatory and wishes to remain part of.

What has the INMO Executive Council decided today?

Members will vote in the coming weeks whether to take strike action. If passed, there will be a 24-hour, all-out strike, with the exception of essential, life-preserving care and emergency response teams for theatres and emergency care.