

HEALTH SECTOR FACT SHEET – NORTHERN IRELAND

OVERVIEW AND PROSPECTS



The Health Sector is one of the biggest sectors in Northern Ireland and employs approximately 69,000 people accounting for 9% of the working population. This covers hospitals, doctors' surgeries, dental practices, ambulance service, nursing homes, complementary medicine and a huge range of other health related activities, from sight tests in opticians to research in medical laboratories.

Almost 59,000 people (85% of the total sector) are employed in the public sector but the importance of the independent and voluntary sectors should not be underestimated.

It is estimated that the health sector across Northern Ireland will need to recruit an additional 39,000 people over the next ten years to fill new jobs and replace existing workers who will retire or leave the sector.

OCCUPATIONS WITHIN THE INDUSTRY

	2007	2017	Net Requirement* 2007-2017
Corporate/Senior Managers	6,500	9,100	5,000
Health Associate Professionals e.g. Nurses, Therapists, Midwives etc.	21,600	26,700	14,000
Caring Personal Services Occupations e.g. Nursing Auxiliaries, Nursery Nurses etc.	22,500	24,400	11,000
Health Professionals e.g. Medical and Dental Practitioners, Pharmacists, Psychologists etc.	4,300	3,900	1,000
Science/Technical Professionals e.g. Chemists Biomedical Scientists etc.	1,700	2,200	1,000
Teaching and Research Professionals e.g. Special Needs Teachers, Primary and Nursery Education Teachers	1,400	1,800	1,000
Business/ Public Service Professionals e.g. Social Workers, Accountants etc.	5,200	5,500	2,000
Administrative Occupations e.g. Administration Officers, Wages Clerk, Filing and Records Clerk, Office Assistants etc.	3,100	2,500	Under 1,000
Secretarial e.g. Medical Secretaries, Personal Assistants, Receptionists	1,300	700	Under 1,000

Source: Working Futures 2007-2017, UK Commission for Employment and Skills

* Net Requirement is a total of the estimated expansion of jobs + replacement demand. All figures are rounded to thousands.

SKILLS AND ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

The health sector offers more than 300 different job opportunities with access in a variety of ways.

Included amongst these are:-

- entry to a job with A levels
- NHS Student bursaries for eligible students on pre-registration health professional training courses
- apprenticeship training in certain areas e.g. pharmacy, health and social care
- more specific entry requirements for health sector professions e.g. physiotherapy, medicine

There are many skills that are highly specific and require specialist training, employers often talk about 'employability skills'. These are the general skills and abilities that enable people to get, keep and do well in any job. For further information on the skills and qualifications needed for the different occupations within the health sector go to www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/hss.htm.

CURRENT VACANCIES AND SKILL SHORTAGES¹

In Northern Ireland 15% of employers in the sector reported that they had at least one vacancy for which they were trying to recruit people from the external labour market and 8% of employers reported at least one vacancy that was proving difficult to fill.

Over one in ten (14%) employers in the sector in Northern Ireland reported a skill gap in their workforce. Skill gaps exist where there is a gap between an employee's current skill level and what is needed to meet work objectives.

DID YOU KNOW THAT IN NORTHERN IRELAND²...

- approximately 80% of the health sector workforce is female
- 41% of the workforce is part-time, 54% is full-time
- 5% of the workforce is self employed.

USEFUL LINKS

Careers Service NI	Provides an impartial all-age careers information, advice and guidance service: www.careersserviceni.com
Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland	Gateways to Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland: www.hscni.net/ Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/
JobCentre Online	Contains vacancies currently notified to Jobs and Benefit offices: www.jobcentreonline.com
DEL NI	Apprenticeships – which one works for you: www.delni.gov.uk/index/successthroughskills/apprenticeshipsni.htm
Skills for Health	The Sector Skills Council (SSC) for the UK health sector: www.skillsforhealth.org.uk

Information provided by Skills for Health. Last updated April 2009. To check that this is the most up-to-date fact sheet go to www.careersserviceni.gov.uk.

¹ Northern Ireland Skills Monitoring Survey 2005, Department for Employment and Learning

² Labour Force Survey 2008