

# Workforce Planning Review

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety  
An Roinn Sláinte, Serbhísí Sóisialta agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí

## Introduction

**"Review 2" should be read as a supplement to the summary document "Review" issued in April 2003.**

The initial Comprehensive Review of the Physiotherapy Workforce of May 2002 was considered as a base line review profiling the workforce at a point in time and predicting future workforce requirements over the 5-year period 2002-2006. "Review 2" updates the original report, comparing statistical information at 31 March 2003.

## Methodology

The original Steering Group was reconvened in June 2003 to compare the workforce profile statistics, test the original assumptions against the updated information, consider the demand and supply information gathered, and share information regarding the actions resulting from the Review recommendations. The Steering Group comprised professional, service manager, human resource, staff side, university and Department representatives.

Statistical information was sourced from Human Resource Management System at 31 March 2003 and an HPSS vacancy survey on 30 September 2002. The following comparisons were drawn.

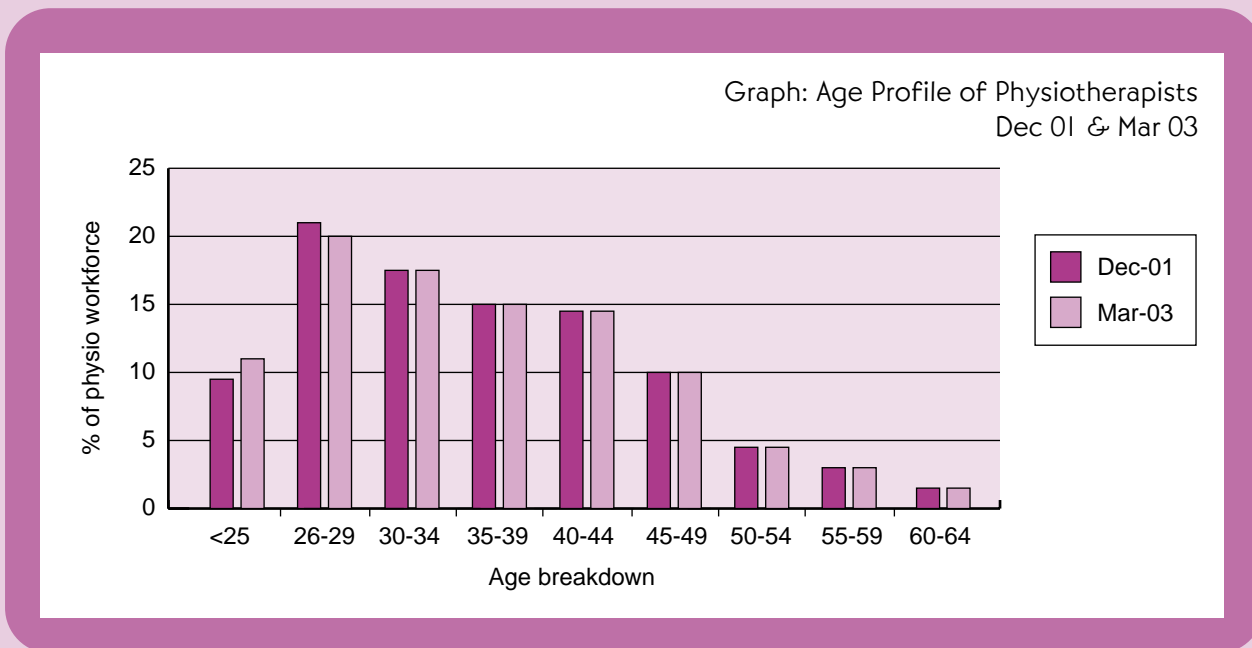
## Key Findings of The Review

- Numbers in the Workforce**

Physiotherapists	2001 (Dec)	2003 (March)
Total	687	738

A total increase of 41 Physiotherapists was noted in the 18-month period.

- Comparison Graph of the Age Profile of Physiotherapists (2001 & 2003)**



There was no significant change in the Physiotherapy workforce age profile. Most staff still fall into the 40 or under age group, where life-work balance requests are at their highest.

- Vacancy Rate**

**Vacancy Rates of the workforce comparing 2001 and 2002 statistics in headcount**

Physiotherapists	Headcount	%
2001	42	6
2002	44	6

The percentage vacancy rate has not altered.

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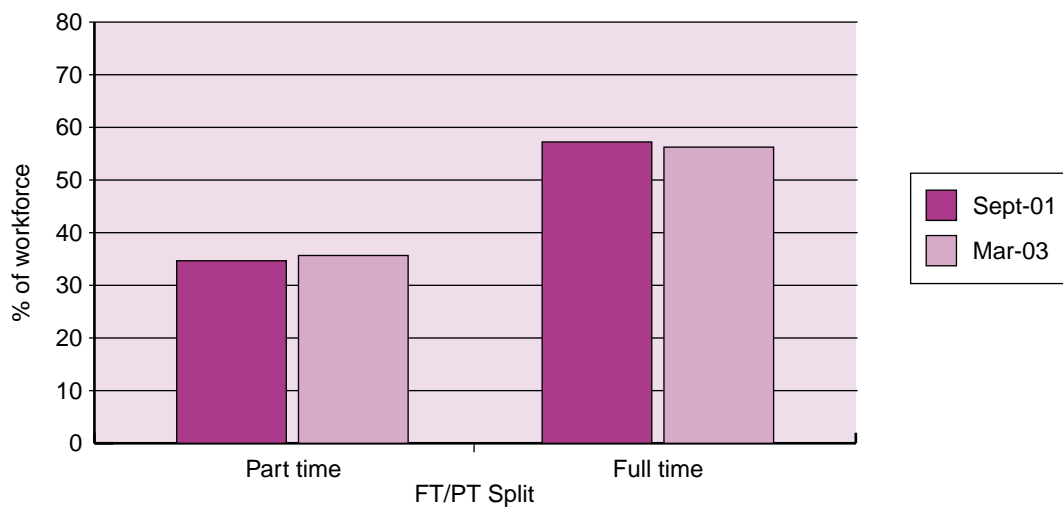
- **Long-term Vacancy Rate (30 September, 2002)**

Definition: a long-term rate is a vacancy of 3 months or more where the post has been advertised at least once.

Physiotherapists	WTE	Headcount	%
Total	10	12	1.6

- **Full-time/Part-time Split of Workforce Comparing September 2001 with March 2003**

Graph: FT/PT Split of Physiotherapists  
Dec 01 & Mar 03



The graph shows a very slight increase in the percentage of part-time Physiotherapists and a corresponding decrease in the full-time workforce. This trend is presumably in response to life-work balance requests for increased flexible working conditions.

- **Assistant Posts**

In 2001 there were 127 Physiotherapy Assistant grade posts in the HPSS and this number increased by 6 to 133 in 2003.

- **First Destination Statistics – % of NI Graduates into the HPSS**

Graduates	1999	2000	2001	2002
HPSS	52%	50%	75%	65%

As the table indicates, graduate Physiotherapists numbers recruited into the HPSS from the University of Ulster increased in percentage from 1999 to 2002. Improvement could still be made upon the percentage of graduates taking up post within NI. Traditionally some UU graduates would have sought experience elsewhere before returning to NI. There is no control over the return of experienced professionals as indicated in the vacancy rate indicated at the level of Senior I specialised posts.

## Supply and Demand Issues Revisited

### Supply Issues

Consideration was given to any factors that may affect change in the supply of Physiotherapists into the workforce.

- Following recommendations of the original review the numbers of Department-commissioned undergraduate places were increased in the 2002/2003 intake by 5. The University simultaneously increased its undergraduate numbers for the same intake. These actions will increase graduation numbers at the completion of the degree course in 2005/6. These additional graduate numbers should be factored into the 5-year workforce plan statistics.
- The first destination statistics for graduates in the HPSS have improved overall. Employment to the HPSS as a percentage of the numbers graduating rose to 75% and 65% in 2001 and 2002, respectively. This increase will now be factored into the supply statistics. A new average figure for first destination into the HPSS will now be substituted into the supply equation over the 5-year plan.
- Leaver statistics appear to have reached the forecasted level.
- The estimated numbers entering the workforce from outside NI, both as new graduates and as mature entrants, were true to the original statistics. However, more employment enquiries were being made from students studying in the ROI. Therefore, this source should continue to be monitored for changes.
- Managers identified an increasing recruitment problem with temporary posts.
- Regionally, managers were experiencing difficulties filling specialised posts, especially for new services at the specialised grade.
- Regionally, 4 Physiotherapists were members of the Local Health and Social Services Groups. This commitment requires dedicated time and, whilst the Group supported and realised the importance of time contributed, it indicated the pressure on the Service. The real impact of these inputs to the LHSSGs should be factored into the Workforce Planning framework.

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### Demand Issues

The group considered the three Demand Levels identified in the original report. The following was identified:

- Generally the demand issues remained as identified within the original report.
- The rate of appointment of posts and the development of services was much slower than first considered in the 5-year plan.
- Workforce shortages in other clinical professions directly correlated to the pressure of work within Physiotherapy, eg if a nursing respiratory post became vacant the Physiotherapy service would have to absorb that impact.
- The CPD workforce requirements were as precise as possible, in line with the anticipated stipulation of the minimum mandatory CPD requirement for re-registration of professionals by the regulatory body the Health Professions Council.
- The effect of Brain Injury Services on the workforce would not be fully felt until 2004.
- The support role of administrative and clerical staff, and its importance to the Physiotherapy service, was emphasised. A regional ratio of administrative and clerical staff to clinical professional staff should be identified, to establish an acceptable norm in preparing business cases and within established structures.

## Actions on the Recommendations

Action	To Be Initiated	In Progress	Complete
Develop a Regional AHP Information Project to improve the value of regional statistical information collection		✓	
AHP Regional Informatics Pilot to test the informatics core curriculum within an AHP team			✓
Information Communication Technology One-day Conference for AHPs to maximise the use of technology in healthcare delivery			✓
Establish AHP homepage/extranet to improve communication and the profile of AHPs in the HPSS			✓
Publish the workforce planning Review document to disseminate workforce information to a wider audience			✓
Convene a regional workshop to progress the development of the AHP Consultant Post			✓
Regional Recruitment Initiative for Entry Level Posts to improve upon the number of graduates entering the HPSS		✓	
Undergraduate Clinical Placement Survey to profile the clinical placements regionally			✓
Clinical Placement Partnership Agreement to formalise the placement system between the education providers, Trusts and the Department		✓	
Establish a commissioning monitoring system and develop the Service Level Agreement between the UU and the Department			✓
Increase by 5 the number of undergraduate commissioned places to improve the number of graduates available to the HPSS			✓

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### Conclusion

The reconvened Steering Group for the Physiotherapy Workforce Planning Project recognised that the initial approach to workforce planning established a profile of the existing and future workforce requirements of health care delivery.

The Project Group demonstrated that the original assumptions and predictions were fairly accurate. However, it recognised the difficulties in identifying accurate timescales for the initiation and expansion of services and the appointment of additional staff. When viewing the 5-year plan as a whole it was, therefore, recognised that establishing new posts took longer than originally assumed. If the original planning had scaled 10 years, and not 5, the plan would have looked somewhat similar, establishing new or expanded service at a slower delivery pace. The Group also felt the methodology used was appropriate.

The Group agreed that it would remain available for any further regional workforce planning requirements.

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JANUARY 2004

## The Project Update Group (2001 & 2003)

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