

# 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 March 2003.**

The initial Comprehensive Review of the Speech and Language Therapy Workforce of September 2001 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.

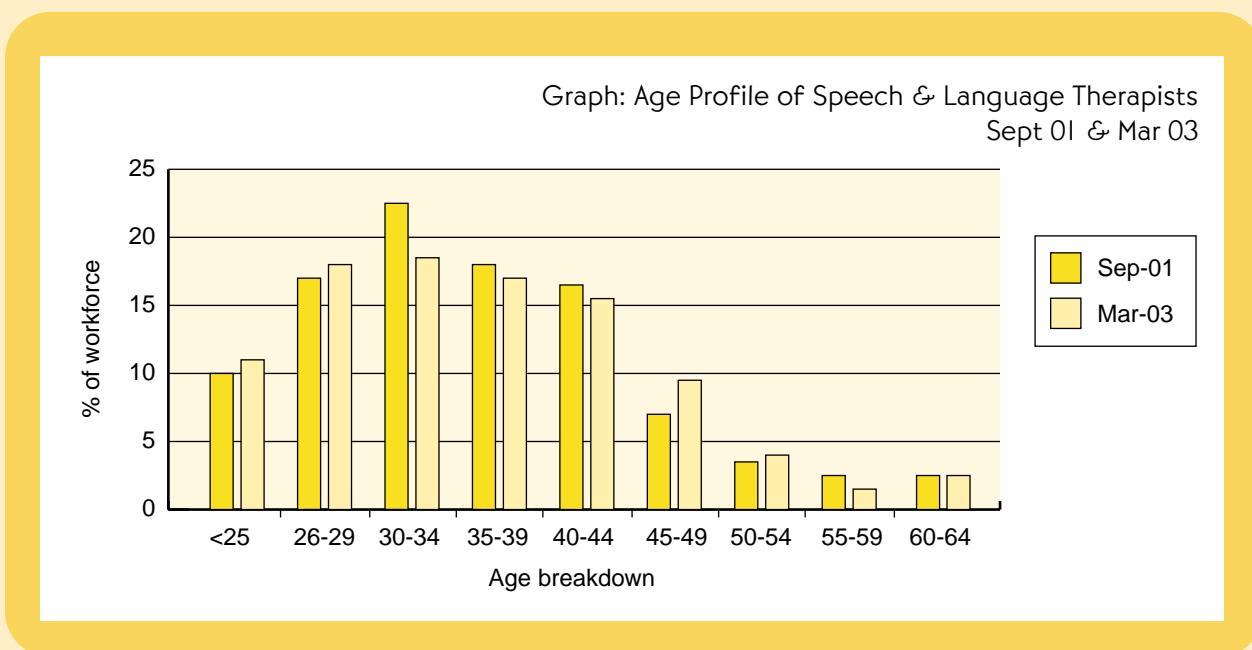
## Key Findings of The Review

- Numbers in the Workforce**

Speech and Language Therapy	2001 (March)	2003 (March)
Total	283	300

An increase of 17 Speech and Language Therapists was noted. These new posts emanated from funding of Priorities for Action.

- Comparison Graph of the Age Profile of Speech and Language Therapists (2001 & 2003)**



The majority of staff still fall into the under 40 age group, where life-work balance requests are at their highest.

- Vacancy Rate**

**Vacancy Rates of the workforce comparing Sept 2001 and March 2003 statistics in headcount**

Speech & Language Therapists	Headcount	%
2001	51	15
2002	16	6

There has been a dramatic reduction in the number of vacant Speech and Language Therapy posts from 51 posts in 2001 to 18 in 2003.

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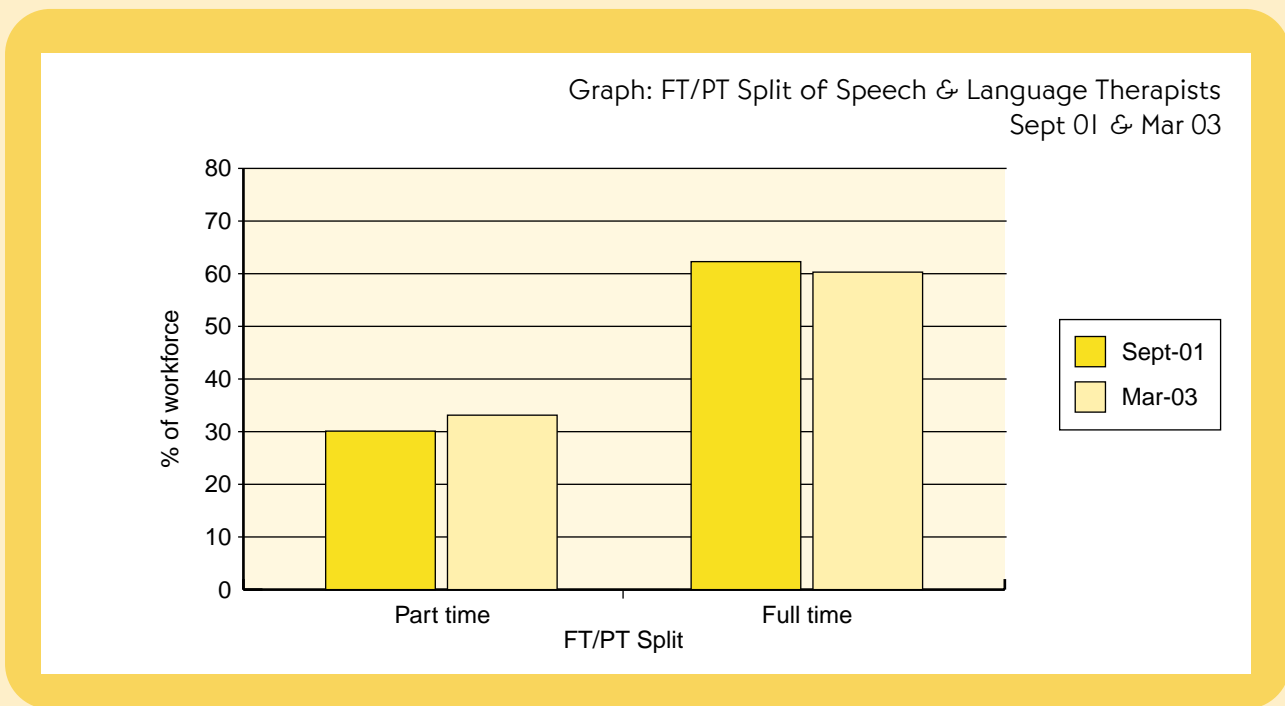
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- **Long-term Vacancy Rate (30 September, 2002)**

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

Speech and Language Therapists	WTE	Headcount	%
Total	6.5	8	2.7

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



The graph shows a slight increase in the percentage of part-time Speech and Language Therapists, 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 and the affordability for some Speech and Language Therapists to reduce contract hours due to the national rebanding of posts.

- **Assistant Posts**

In September 2001 there were 13 Speech and Language Assistant grade posts in the HPSS and this number increased by 6 to 19 in 2003.

## ● First Destination Statistics – % of NI Graduates into the HPSS

Graduates	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
HPSS	66%	65%	55.5%	57%	59.8%

As the table indicates, graduate Speech and Language Therapist numbers recruited into the HPSS from the University of Ulster have remained less than 65% in any one year and in some years there has been a loss of 44% of total students. The Entry grade recruitment pilot was initiated in 2002 to improve on these losses. The HPSS wishes actively to encourage Entry level posts within its Service to be attractive to graduate entrants.

## Supply and Demand Issues Revisited

### Supply Issues

Consideration was given to any factors that may affect change in the supply of Speech and Language Therapists into the workforce.

- Following recommendations of the original review the numbers of Department-commissioned undergraduate places were increased in the 2002/2003 intake by 6. The University simultaneously increased its undergraduate numbers for the same intake. These actions will increase the 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 not significantly improved. Employment to the HPSS as a percentage of the numbers graduating decreased from 66% in 1998 to to 59.8% in 2003. This loss to the HPSS must be addressed.
- 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.
- 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.
- Discussion took place around improving the structure supporting Assistant posts and progressing these issues to improve upon the skill mix in the Speech and Language workforce.
- Managers identified the difficulties presented with attempting to manage a number of smaller isolated services.
- Despite a poor response to the drive to bring qualified staff back into practice, it would be worthwhile establishing a more formal course which could initially be discussed regionally at the managers' forum.
- The HPSS Speech and Language Therapy Service must promote the Service at UU level to undergraduates.

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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.
- Administrative and clerical support remains an issue. A lack of this resource puts pressure on the time of professionals that could be spent on direct patient care.
- LHSCGs have continued to exert time pressures on professionals but with a positive and important effect of identifying and progressing the requirements of patients and clients locally. The true impact on professional time should be ascertained one year into the process and identified within workforce planning.
- The Group moved CPD requirements from Demand Level 2 to Demand Level 1 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.

## 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 6 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 Speech and Language Therapy 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 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)

Mildred Bell.....	Homefirst Community HSS Trust
Joyce Cairns.....	DHSSPS
Carmel Cassidy.....	Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust
Lynne Davison.....	DHSSPS
Dorothy Jeffrey.....	DHSSPS
Jackie McCusker.....	Eastern Health & Social Services Board
Chris Timney.....	Greenpark HSS Trust
Joan White.....	Newry & Mourne HSS Trust

## Contact Address

Department of Health Social Services & Public Safety  
Human Resources Directorate  
Workforce Development Unit  
Room DI.4  
Castle Buildings  
Stormont Estate  
Upper Newtownards Road  
BELFAST BT4 3SQ

<http://extranet.dhsspsni.gov.uk>

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