

Press release

Minister for Health announces General Practitioner (GP) training places to increase by one third by 2024

From [Department of Health \(/en/organisation/department-of-health/\)](/en/organisation/department-of-health/).

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- number of GP Training Places to increase from an intake of 258 in 2022 to 350 in 2024 – a 35% increase
- the total number of trainees undertaking the four-year programme will increase from the current 932 to 1,300 in 2026 – a 45% increase
- capacity on the Non-EU GP Training Scheme to increase from 50 to 250 by the end of 2024 – a 400% increase

The Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly has today (Friday 2 June 2023) confirmed a significant increase in the number of GP training places.

Minister Donnelly engaged with the Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP) earlier this year to explore increasing GP training places by 2024.

The GP training scheme, which is run by the ICGP, accepted 258 new doctors onto its 2022/2023 specialist training programme. At present there are 932 trainees undertaking the 4 year-programme.

The number of GP training places will rise to 285 this coming July, before increasing to 350 in July 2024 which will see a total of 1,300 trainees undertaking the programme.

Minister Donnelly said:

"I am committed to increasing our medical workforce. We must plan for the future. This is a hugely positive step as it offers more training places to doctors who want to specialise as General Practitioners and is very good news for patients."

HSE Chief Executive Bernard Gloster said:

"The rapid expansion of GP training places builds on the work of recent years. This most welcome development is the single biggest improvement for the future resourcing of one of the most vital components of health services for the people. We will take every opportunity to ensure the growth of general practice across the country."

Minister Donnelly also announced a significant increase in the number of doctors participating in the successful non-EU GP Training Programme. The Non-EU GP Training Programme aims to identify, support and integrate a cohort of non-EU GPs into the rural Irish workforce. A number are already working in general practices around the country.

This programme, developed by the HSE and ICGP, is having an immediate impact through increased capacity in general practice, with an intake of 100 doctors expected by the end of this year, and a further intake of 250 by the end of 2024.

Minister Donnelly said:

"These are highly experienced and skilled GPs from around the world, who take part in a two-year programme combining frontline GP work with mentoring and training at designated practices. Expanding the number of GP training places to an all-time high of 350, coupled with the great strides being made in our Non-EU Programme, will help us to strengthen our primary care services and increase our vital General Practice workforce now and into the future."

The Minister thanked the ICGP for its work and vision, stating:

"It is an innovative organisation that is seeking to find solutions to address capacity constraints."

The Chief Executive Officer of the Irish College of General Practitioners, Fintan Foy, said:

"We welcome the Minister's plans to increase the number of training places for general practice. The workforce and workload crisis in General Practice is affecting patients who have to wait longer to see their GP, as well as thousands of patients who are unable to register with a GP practice. We need more GPs and this increase in training places is a significant measure to enable more doctors to become GPs here in Ireland."

Mr Foy added:

"We acknowledge and thank the Minister and the HSE for its support in our non-EU Rural Doctors programme. This is a great initiative in ensuring that rural communities continue to be served with quality GP services."

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