

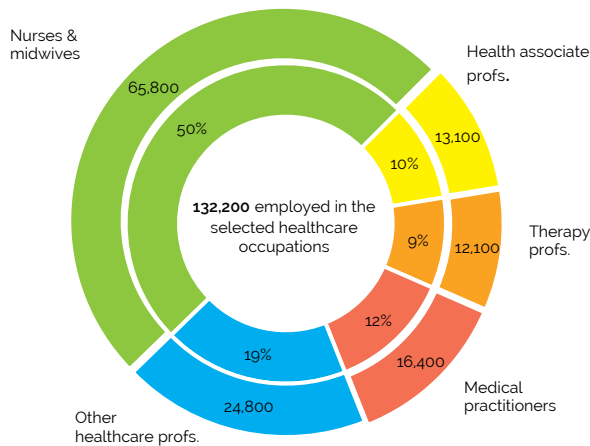
9.4 Healthcare* Occupations

Overall employment: Approximately 132,000 persons (75% female) were employed in the selected healthcare occupations, representing 5.6% of the national workforce.

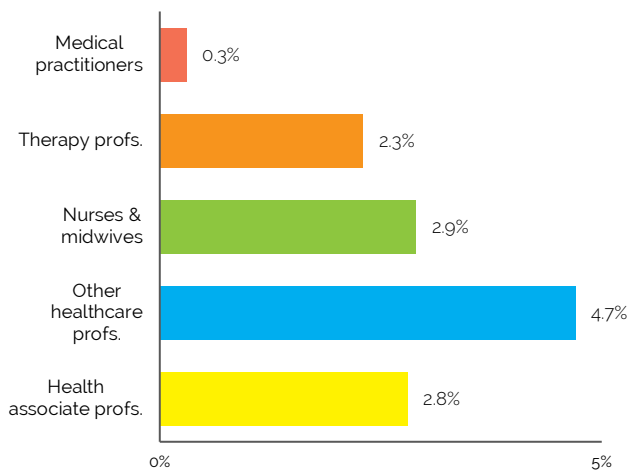
- **Sector:** 88% of overall employment was concentrated in the health sector
- **Employment growth (5-year):** Between 2014 and 2019, overall employment increased by 17,000 (2.8% on average annually compared to 3.2% nationally). The strongest rate of employment growth was observed for other healthcare professionals (4.7%) during the period
- **Age:** The 25-54 year age group accounted for the majority of persons employed, at 80%. The share of employees aged 55 years and over (16%) was below the national average of 19%
- **Education:** Those who had attained third level qualifications (94%) was significantly above the national average share (48%), while 5% had attained a higher secondary/FET qualification
- **Full-time/part-time:** Approximately 79% of healthcare workers were in full-time employment
- **Nationality:** The share of non-Irish workers was broadly in line with the national average of 16%, while 84% of workers were Irish nationals.

*Carers are examined in Chapter 9.6 (Social and Care Occupations)

Numbers employed, 2019 (annual average)



Average growth rates (%) 2014-2019



Between 2014 and 2019, overall employment increased by 17,100 (2.8% on average annually compared to 3.2% nationally).

Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO data

Overall Outlook for these Occupations

Employment growth for this occupational group was below the national average for the period 2014 to 2019. Despite significant demands for their services, particularly as a result of COVID-19, employment numbers are very much dependent on government funding. Demand for health services is expected to continue to grow due to Ireland's ageing demographics. A decline of 6%, or 7,900 persons, employed in healthcare occupations is forecast for 2020 (annual average) when compared to 2019; those negatively impacted in terms of employment numbers are likely to be based outside the hospital/nursing home setting. It is also important to note that with the exception of managerial roles, the majority of those employed in healthcare occupations are likely to have significant exposure levels to diseases and work in close proximity to others, according to the CSO research. Medical practitioners and nurses have a higher share of those employed who are non-Irish nationals; any fall in the supply of inward migration may have an impact on employment numbers.

Occupation	Economic summary
Medical practitioners	Prior to 2020, despite strong demand for medical practitioners as evidenced by employment permit data, employment levels had remained relatively unchanged. The impact of COVID-19 varied across types of doctors, with demand particularly strong for those in the frontline, while others may have seen a temporary drop in demand for services. Future employment growth will be largely dependent on government policy in this area.
Therapy profs.	The five-year annual average employment growth was below the national average. Those working outside the hospital setting, such as physiotherapists and occupational therapists, may have seen a fall in demand for routine services as a result of COVID-19 restrictions. Government policies, in part, will determine employment levels in these occupations in the short to medium term.
Nurses & midwives	Although the five-year employment growth was below the national average, demand for nurses has never been so strong as a result of COVID-19, particularly as this occupation has one of the highest risks of exposure to disease. Nurses accounted for 12% of all new employment permits issued in 2019 and appeared frequently in the vacancy data. With such a large number employed, replacement demand alone will result in continued job openings for this profession.
Other healthcare profs. (e.g. pharmacists, psychologists, dentists, radiographers, vets, & health services managers)	This occupation experienced above average employment growth over the last five years with recruitment demand relating primarily to radiographers. Increased output from the education and training system is unlikely to be sufficient to meet demand in the short-term with over 100 employment permits issued in 2019. Those working outside the hospital setting, such as psychologists, dentists, opticians, may have seen a fall in demand for routine services as a result of COVID-19 restrictions.
Health associate profs.	Employment growth was below the national average. Those working outside of the hospital setting, such as dental technicians/nurses, acupuncturists and sports therapists, may have seen a fall in employment as a result of COVID-19 restrictions.

**For detailed table see Appendix A*