



Health Service Executive
Workplace Health and Wellbeing Unit

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH NURSING STRATEGY

2020 – 2024

OCTOBER 2020



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Acknowledgements

As National Clinical Lead, Workplace Health and Wellbeing Unit (WHWU), I am delighted to endorse the strategy for Occupational Health Nursing 2020 - 2024. Given my professional background in Occupational Health, as an Occupational Health Physician, I know the critical role of Occupational Health Nursing within our services. I am privileged to have worked in many sectors with Occupational Health Nurses who were vital key members of our multidisciplinary team. This strategy focuses on career pathways, governance, workforce planning, education, standards and research. The Covid 19 pandemic led to a significant demand on our Occupational Health Services and I am grateful to the Occupational Health Nursing Teams across our service for their flexibility and dynamic responsiveness. Occupational Health Nursing is fundamental to our services and this strategy will advance the profile of the profession. I want to thank all members of the Project Group for their significant contribution to this work. Finally, I look forward to seeing the implementation of this strategy through the Clinical Advisory Group, Workplace Health and Wellbeing Unit.



Dr Lynda Sisson

National Clinical Lead

Workplace Health and Wellbeing Unit, HR Division, Health Service Executive

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The Health Service Executive's first Strategy for Occupational Health Nursing 2020 - 2024, maps the future for Occupational Health Nursing. The Model of Care for Occupational Health Services is a key part of the strategy with six key areas: career pathways, education, standards, workforce planning, governance and research. This strategy was informed by a wide consultation process and I want to acknowledge the team members and all stakeholders involved. It is important for me to state as our Health Services continue to manage a global pandemic, I am grateful to the Occupational Health Nurses across our services for their vital input in managing Covid 19 to date and in the future.



Ms. Anne Marie Hoey

National Director Human Resources

Health Service Executive

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Office of Nursing and Midwifery Services Director & Assistant National Director,

Office of the Chief Clinical Officer. I wish to acknowledge the leadership of the Workplace Health & Wellbeing Unit in developing this Strategy through the Project Group and wider consultation. Occupational Health Nursing in responding to the changing landscape is taking a proactive approach guided by this roadmap. The global COVID19 pandemic has showcased the vital role that Occupational Health Nurses have and this is a very appropriate time to strategise and further develop career pathways in this area.



Dr Geraldine Shaw,

Office of Nursing and Midwifery Services Director & Assistant
National Director, Office of the Chief Clinical Officer

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I am delighted to endorse the Occupational Health Nursing Strategy 2020 - 2024. This strategy focuses on career pathways, governance, workforce planning, education, standards and research. It is a comprehensive strategy providing a clear roadmap for the development of Occupational Health Nursing at a time when there are extensive demands on the health system. The CNO office worked with the project team as part of the consultation process. The vision of the Chief Nursing Office is a future where the contribution of nurses and midwives to the achievement of National Public Health goals in partnership with other health and social care professionals is achieved through policy development and implementation. In this regard the Occupational Health Nursing Strategy provides an opportunity to modernise our approach to Occupational Health Nursing as we reform our Health Services through Sláintecare.

The launch of this strategy is important for many reasons but particularly as we continue to manage Covid 19 within our services. The protection of healthcare workers is paramount for protecting our patients and maintaining our services. I want to express my thanks to the project team and I look forward to implementation of the recommendations and the outcomes across our acute and community services as a result.



Rachel Kenna, Chief Nurse Officer

Department of Health

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Consultation and Engagement Process

We want to thank the following groups who were involved in the consultation process and contributed significant feedback to this document:

Ms Anne Marie Hoey, National Director Human Resources, Health Service Executive.

Dr Geraldine Shaw, Office of Nursing and Midwifery Services Director & Assistant National Director, Office of the Chief Clinical Officer

Mr Paul Gallagher on behalf of the Group Directors of Nursing and Midwifery.

Ms Rachel Kenna, Chief Nursing Officer, Department of Health, Government of Ireland.

Dr Anne Marie Ryan on behalf of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland.

Maureen Nolan on behalf of the Office of Nursing and Midwifery Services Director

*Executive Team Workplace Health and Wellbeing Unit
Human Resources, Health Service Executive*

Glossary of Terms

ADON	Assistant Director of Nursing
BScN	Bachelor of Science in Nursing
CNM	Clinical Nurse Manager
CNMI	Clinical Nurse Manager 1
CNMII	Clinical Nurse Manager 2
CNMIII	Clinical Nurse Manager 3
CNS	Clinical Nurse Specialist
DOH	Department of Health
DON	Director of Nursing
HIQA	Health Information Quality Authority
HR	Human Resources
HSE	Health Service Executive
NMBI	Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland
OHN	Occupational Health Nurse
ONMSD	Office of Nursing and Midwifery Services Director
OHS	Occupational Health Service
QA+I	Quality Assessment and Improvement
RANP	Registered Advanced Nurse Practitioner
RAMP	Registered Advanced Midwifery Practitioner
WHWU	Workplace Health and Wellbeing Unit

Executive Summary

The primary purpose of the Occupational Health Nursing Strategy 2020 - 2024 is to raise awareness of the importance of Occupational Health Nursing in protecting the health and wellbeing of the working population in the healthcare sector, and to provide a roadmap for the standardisation and role development of Occupational Health Nursing in Ireland's public health services.

The strategy was developed in response to the rapid change and development underway nationally, and internationally, in occupational health services and workplace health and wellbeing. Such changes have been attributed, by the World Health Organisation, (WHO 2001), to the new demands and expectations from employers, employees, representative bodies & legal requirements. It is well recognised that there are multiple economic, social and health benefits achieved by providing appropriate services.

Modernisation and integration of Occupational Health Services provides opportunities for nurses to lead on the design of services and care delivery.

The protection of healthcare workers has been a priority for the response in managing Covid-19 and will continue in preparing for further outbreak management. Occupational Health services have an important role in protecting healthcare workers and ensuring business continuity of health services.

This strategy was developed by an inter-professional Project Steering Group and a comprehensive consultation process was undertaken.

This strategy focuses on six themes:

1. Career Pathways
2. Education and Competencies
3. Governance
4. Workforce Planning/Service Development
5. Standards
6. Research

Summary of Recommendations

Career Pathways	
1.1	To progress career pathways for Occupational Health Nursing (OHN) through the Workplace Health and Wellbeing Unit (WHWU) Executive Forum, in line with agreed policies and regulations
1.2	To develop core competencies for each grade within the Occupational Health Nursing Team
Education	
2.1	To conduct a training needs analysis for each occupational health service as part of the HSE Occupational Health Service Standards
2.2	To design modules and Post Graduate Diploma Programmes in Occupational Health Nursing with occupational health specific curriculum content
2.3	To assess Occupational Health Service Departments as a potential setting for Clinical Placement for BScN Undergraduate Students in consultation with NMBI Quality Clinical Learning Environmental Guidance document (www.nmbi.ie)
2.4	To implement on-going continuous professional development for Occupational Health Nursing in each service area.
Governance	
3.1	To appoint a Director of Nursing for Occupational Health Nursing within WHWU.(Band 1 Level)
3.2	To appoint a senior nursing representative on the Workplace Health and Wellbeing Unit Executive Team
Workforce Planning	
4.1	To develop a local workforce plan for Occupational Health Nursing in collaboration with the multidisciplinary team, using the agreed policies and frameworks as outlined by the Department of Health and in compliance with HSE Occupational Health Service Standards
4.2	To implement the following factors within the workforce plan – ratios of occupational health team members to healthcare workers, service capacity and skill mix.
Standards	
5.1	To ensure on-going compliance with NMBI Practice Standards for Nurses and Midwives
5.2	To assess compliance with HSE Standards for Occupational Health Services 2018
Research	
6.1	To develop a research plan for Occupational Health Nursing to include data relevant and applicable to occupational health settings
6.2	To develop a forum for sharing and communication of relevant research and data to the Occupational Health Nursing setting

Introduction and Context

Mission

The vision of the Health Service Executive is to have a healthier Ireland with a high quality health service valued by all (HSE 2015). Our mission is for people in Ireland to access safe, compassionate, quality care, to be fully supported by health and social care services to help them achieve their full potential. Our values are care, compassion, trust and learning. (www.hse.ie)

Figure 1. HSE Vision, Mission and Values



Strategy

Strategy refers to a substantial working plan devised to affect the medium and long-term future. Strategic planning is the systematic organised process to progress and organisation from its current situation to the desired future (Perero & Peiro 2012). Two significant factors are highlighted in strategic planning: firstly, it is an organisational approach as opposed to an individual one, and secondly a transformational purpose exists.

This means that the current characteristics are defined, and a roadmap for transition to the desired future is presented. This strategy recognizes that Occupational Health Nurses play a major role in protecting and improving the health and wellbeing of the working population in Ireland's Public Health Services.

Occupational Health Nursing Vision

To achieve excellence in Occupational Health Nursing, to enable all workers to perform to the best of their ability, and to deliver an excellent service

This vision statement will contribute to the realisation of the HSE's vision –'A healthier Ireland with a high quality health service valued by all'.

Occupational Health Nursing Mission Statement

Occupational Health Nursing services support workers in the HSE to achieve their full potential by protecting, maintaining and promoting their health so that they can access a safe, compassionate, person-centred quality care when they need it (www.hse.ie).

Occupational Health Nursing Values

Our values are adapted and aligned to the Office of the Nursing and Midwifery Services Director Strategic Plan 2019-2021 (www.hse.ie)

Care

- We will support the provision of care that is of the highest quality
- We will promote evidence based best practice
- We will incorporate the views and opinions of our health and social care workers and consider them in how we plan and deliver our services.

Compassion

- We will show respect, kindness, consideration and empathy in our communication and interaction with health and social care workers
- We will be courteous and open in our communication with our health and social care workers and recognise their fundamental worth
- We will provide services with commitment, dignity and demonstrate professionalism at all times.

Commitment

- We will have a person centred approach to professional practice
- We will have a commitment to lifelong learning
- We will have a work ethic that is underpinned by our professional obligation to health and social care workers.
- We will enable the development of diligence and resilience within health and social care teams within occupational health nursing teams.

Trust

- We will provide services in which health and social care workers have trust and confidence
- We will be open and transparent in how we provide services
- We will show honesty, integrity, consistency and accountability in decisions and actions.

Learning

- We will foster learning, innovation and creativity
- We will support and encourage our workforce to achieve their full potential
- We will acknowledge when something is wrong, apologise for it, take corrective action and learn from it.

Workplace Health and Wellbeing Overview

The Workplace Health and Wellbeing Unit (WHWU), was set up in March 2016. The areas of governance and responsibility for the unit are as follows:

- Occupational Health Services – including staff rehabilitation and case management
- Health and Safety Function
- Employee Assistance Programme
- Staff Health and Wellbeing
- Organisational Health

The WHWU is implementing a Model of Care based on the following six key strategies:

1. Prevention of ill health caused by or exacerbated by work
2. Timely intervention – easy and early treatment for the main cause of sickness absence
3. Rehabilitation – to help workers stay at work or return to work after illness
4. Health Assessments for Work – to help manage attendance, retirement and related matters
5. Promotion of Health and Wellbeing – using work as a means to improve health and wellbeing, and using the workplace to promote health
6. Teaching and training – encouraging workers to support staff health and wellbeing

Occupational Health Nursing is key to the implementation of the Workplace Health and Wellbeing Model of Care (WHWU) within an interdisciplinary team.

Occupational Health Nursing is a clinical area that is situated at the interface between health and work, involving preventative programmes such as vaccinations, surveillance, rehabilitation, advisory roles and optimising the health of workers. Over the last number of decades the role and context of Occupational Health Nursing has changed considerably. In February 2020 the onset of a Global Pandemic – Covid 19- led to a significant increase in the demand for WHWU services.

This strategy articulates recommendations for career pathways, education, governance, workforce planning, standards and research. This will support the transformation of Occupational Health Nursing in our services in order to meet the future demand

within Community Healthcare Organisations and Hospital Groups.

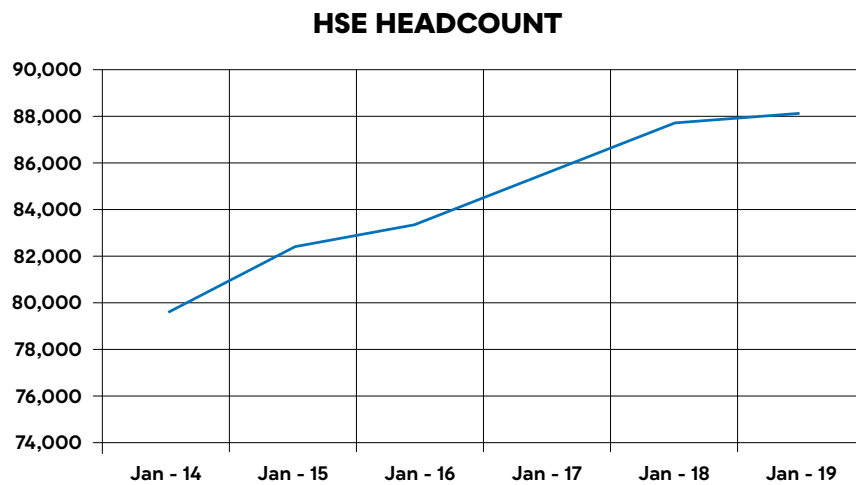
The HSE is the largest employer in the state, please see Table 1. Occupational Health Services are available to all healthcare workers and this is measured by headcount to reflect the actual population of staff served.

Table 1 HSE Headcount

Census Date	Organisation	Total WTE	Total Number of Staff (Headcount)
31st December 2019	HSE Only	76,905	88,215

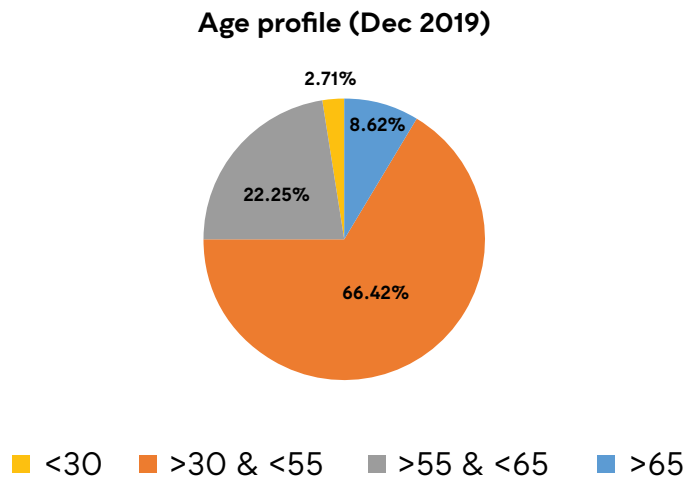
Graph 1 HSE Staff numbers

HSE Headcount numbers increased by 11% over the period 2014 – 2019



It is important to record the increased headcount within the HSE as this has a direct impact on Occupational Health Services in terms of service demand, for example for pre-employment health assessments, vaccinations and surveillance. A second factor to consider is the profile of staff age. Less than 9% of staff are aged <30 years, while 25% are aged >55 years, refer to Chart 1 Age Profile.

Chart 1 Age Profile



An ageing workforce poses a number of challenges to employees, employers and organisations including the following:

- Longer working lives may result in longer exposure to risks
- A higher proportion of older workers means more people having chronic health problems and specific needs
- Older workers might be vulnerable to certain hazards
- Disability prevention, rehabilitation and return to work are of increased importance

Good workplace design and work organisation benefits all age groups. In the context of an aging workforce within the HSE, it is more important than ever to help people with health problems remain in work through occupational rehabilitation and policies facilitating return to work.

It is important that the Occupational Health Nursing Strategy 2020 - 2024 is aligned to the implementation of the Sláintecare Report (2017) to reform the health system within Ireland.

Key components of Sláintecare are as follows:

- Entitlement of all Irish residents to all health and social care
- Care provided at the lowest level of complexity, in an integrated way
- Strong focus on public health and health promotion

The scope of practice in occupational health nursing has greatly expanded with the increased emphasis on health promotion, prevention, case management and health protection services. Many factors have influenced the evolution of occupational health nursing practice. Among them are the recent Global Pandemic, Covid -19, changing population and workforce, the introduction of new work processes, increased work demands. Technological advances, regulatory requirements, increased focus on illness/injury prevention, and a rise in health care costs.

The global pandemic Covid -19 has increased the demands on the Occupational Health Services and the role of the Occupational Health Nursing Teams, which are vital in meeting the demand in alignment with the Workplace Health and Wellbeing Model of Care.

The response to the Covid-19 pandemic has presented an opportunity for Occupational Health Nursing to define their role, activity and outcomes. On-going modernisation of occupational health services and improving healthcare worker outcomes will be supported via the Occupational Nursing Strategy 2020-2024.

1. Career Pathways

1.1 Background

The report of the Commission of Nursing was the most detailed report in relation to the Nursing and Midwifery Profession. The report 'A Blueprint for the Future', Department of Health and Children (DOH&C, 1988) presented comprehensive information on advance roles, reporting relationships and educational pathways. It identified a need for an ordered and a coherent approach to the progression of specialisation and the development of a clinical career pathway for nursing.

In 2019, the Office of the Chief Nurse, Department of Health, published a Policy on the Development of Advanced Nursing and Midwifery Practice, recommending the following:

- A framework to develop critical mass of Registered Advanced Nurse Practitioners, Registered Advanced Midwife Practitioners through a developmental pathway for graduate and specialist nurses and midwives.
- Change the way we educate and train nurses and midwives from graduate level
- Change how we utilize and deploy the nursing and midwifery resource
- Measure impact and effectiveness of the new framework

1.2 Staffing Establishments

Currently in terms of staff establishments, there are eighty-four (84) Occupational Health Nurses working in the HSE and Section 38 Voluntary Agencies in the Irish Public Health sector. The grade profile ranges from Registered Nurse to Assistant Director of Nursing Grade.

1.3 Career Pathways and Occupational Health Nursing

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland outlines career opportunities and pathways in four areas, Clinical, Education, Research and Management (www.nmbi.ie).

The role of the Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) was developed as part of the Commission on Nursing Report, with five competencies clearly defined, Clinical, Patient/Client advocate, Education and Training, Audit and Research, Consultant (www.ncm.ie).

Current Approach to Advance Nurse Practitioner Progression

The education pathway developed for a nurse or midwife supports the five national integrated pathways (HSE 2016) of care. The initial registration of a nurse underpins the integration focus and is based on a developmental model that embraces credentialed education that can be annotated by the Nursing, Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI). The timeline for education development of a Registered Advanced Nurse Practitioner (RANP)/ Registered Advanced Midwife Practitioner (RAMP) is two years from initial registration. In this mode it is also possible for specialist practice education preparation to develop to meet service need in a one-year period. The Department of Health (2019) Policy on the Development of Graduate to Advanced Nursing and Midwifery Practice, provides a comprehensive national policy document with extensive support and advice. Creating a pathway for skill development from graduation, in a meaningful purposive manner, ensures the capability of the nurse/midwife to meet the service need. The continued development of career pathways for Occupational Health Nursing is dependent on a national approach, and must be a dynamic process.

1. Recommendation – Career Pathways

- 1.1 To advance career pathways for Occupational Health Nursing (OHN) through the Workplace Health and Wellbeing Unit (WHWU), Clinical Advisory Group, in line with agreed policies and regulations

**Department of Health (2019) Policy on the Development of Graduate to Advanced Nursing and Midwifery Practice. Dublin D.O.H.*

- 1.2 To develop core competencies for each grade within the Occupational Health Nursing Team.

**Gerontological Nursing – Role Profiling March 2019. Provides a framework with Domains of Competence and Associated Standards.*

2. Nursing Education and Competencies

Occupational Health Nurses (OHNs) are the largest single group of health professionals involved in delivering health services to healthcare workers. They are at the frontline in helping to protect and promote the health of working populations (WHO, 2001). It is important to standardize professional qualifications and skills to meet the increasing demand for Occupational Health Nursing Services.

2.1 Academic Profile

Academic profiles range from certificate to higher post/graduate diploma; primary degrees and masters level qualifications.

2.2 Professional Competencies

Competency is defined as the “attainment of knowledge, intellectual capabilities, practice skills, integrity, professional and ethical values required for safe accountable, compassionate and effective practice as a Registered Nurse or Registered Midwife”.

The following competencies are fundamental for Occupational Health Nursing

- Professional values and Conduct of the OHN
- Clinical Decision Making
- Knowledge and Cognitive Competencies
- Communication and Interpersonal Competencies
- Management and Team Competencies
- Leadership and Professional Scholarship Competencies (NMBI, 2015)

A competency framework refers to the collection of competencies and their indicators specifying the expected standards of effective performance.

Occupational Health Service specific areas of competency include the following:

- Disease preventable vaccinations relevant to works risks
- Health Surveillance
- Contact tracing
- Data collection and interpretation
- Management of Occupational Blood Exposure

- Pre-Employment health assessments EHA screening
- Assessment of fitness to work
- Case management for complex health needs
- Clinical assessment following injury/illness due to work
- Mental health assessment
- Technical skill relating to recording audiograms
- Skill in audiogram interpretation
- Technical skill relating to recording spirometry
- Venepuncture
- Skills in ergonomics assessment
- Risk assessment at a unit and organisational level
- Health Promotion in areas including smoking cessation, weight management and lifestyle
- Rehabilitation of healthcare workers to enable them to return to work
- Communication skills and negotiation skills within a multidisciplinary team

2.3 Mandatory Training

Mandatory training is critical to both client care and workforce safety. This training supports staff to fulfil their roles and responsibility for patient and workforce safety (HIQA 2012). Mandatory training includes Lifting and Handling, Fire Training, CPR, Anaphylaxis, Hand Hygiene and Sharps Management.

2. Recommendations – Education and Training

- 2.1 To conduct training needs analysis for each occupational health service as part of the OHS standards
- 2.2 To design modules and Post Graduate Diploma Programmes in Occupational Health Nursing with occupational health specific curriculum content
- 2.3 To assess Occupational Health Service Departments as a potential setting for Clinical Placement for BScN Undergraduate Students in consultation with Higher Education Institutions in compliance with NMBI Quality Clinical Learning Environment Guidance document (www.nmbi.ie)
- 2.4 To implement on-going continuous professional development for occupational health nursing in each service

3. Governance

3.1 Health Service Executive

Formalised governance arrangements ensure that everyone working in the Irish public health service is aware of their responsibilities, authority and accountability and work towards achieving improved patient outcomes. Effective governance recognizes the inter-dependencies between corporate and clinical governance across services and integrates them to deliver high quality, safe and reliable healthcare. Clinical governance is a framework through which healthcare teams are accountable for the quality, safety and satisfaction outcomes of patients in the care they deliver. It is built on the model of the Chief Executive Officer/General Manager or equivalent working in partnership with the Clinical Director, Director of Nursing/Midwifery and service/professional leads. (www.HSE.2012)

3. Recommendations – Governance

- 3.1 To appoint a Director of Nursing for Occupational Health Nursing within HSE Workplace Health and Wellbeing Unit (Band One Level)
- 3.2 To appoint a senior nursing representative on the Workplace Health and Wellbeing Unit Executive Team

4. Service Development/ Workforce Planning

Changing population and workforce, increased work demands, technological advances and regulatory changes have influenced and impacted on Occupational Health Nursing over the last decades. Occupational Health Nursing services consist of Registered Nurses who work in, for, or with the service provider and are integral to the delivery of a high-quality, person centred and safe service. Service providers must be able to assure the public, service users and their workforce that everyone working in the Occupational Health Nursing service is contributing to a high-quality, safe service.

Occupational health Services require a robust model of workforce planning to determine current and future requirements for service provision. The Department of Health published a National Strategic Framework for Health and Social Care Workforce Planning (2017).

The HSE Safer, Better Care Standards for Occupational Health Services (2018) includes workforce planning/resource planning as a specific theme for the multidisciplinary team in Occupational Health Services. The HSE approved methodology for Quality Assurance Improvement (QA+I) provides support in terms of continuous and sustained improvement for OHS to assess their individual standards of workforce planning.

The Workplace Health and Wellbeing Unit developed a comprehensive workforce plan for Occupational Health Services in Q2. 2002. Please refer to Appendix 2.

4. Recommendations – Workforce Planning

- 4.1 To develop a local Workforce Plan for occupational health nursing in collaboration with the multidisciplinary team, using the agreed frameworks as outlined by the Department of Health and in compliance with the OHS Standards
- 4.2 To implement the following factors within workforce plans for each area – ratios of occupational health team members to healthcare workers, service, capacity and skill mix

5. Standards

A standard is considered by an authority as a basis of comparison; as an approved model. Occupational Health Nursing has a number of standards, professional, area specific standards and standards from independent bodies.

5.1 Professional Standards

Currently a number of standards are in place to support Nursing and Midwifery in Ireland. The standards are issued from The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland and include the following:

- Scope of Nursing and Midwifery Practice Framework
- Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Nurses and Registered Midwives (2014)

Scope of the Practice Framework

Scope of Practice for nurses and midwives in Ireland is determined by legislation, European Directives, international developments, social policy, national and local guidelines, education and the individual practitioner's level of competence. The purpose of the NMBI Scope of Nursing and Midwifery Practice Framework is to provide nurses and midwives with professional guidance and support on matters relating to the scope of their clinical practice. (www.nmbi.ie)

Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics 2014

The Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics was approved in 2014 by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland, and guides nurses and midwives in their professional practice.

Purpose, aims and structure of the code are as follows:

- Support and guide nurses and midwives in their ethical and clinical decision making, their on-going reflection and professional self-development.
- Inform the general public about the professional care they can expect from nurse and midwives.

- Emphasise the importance of nurse and midwives to recognize and respond to the needs of patients and families.
- Set standards for the regulation, monitoring and enforcement of professional conduct.

5.2 HSE Safer Better Care – Occupational Health Service Standards

The standards for HSE Safer Better Care Standards – Occupational Health Services were launched in May 2017 and will be reviewed in January 2021. The aim of these standards is to help drive improvements in the quality and safety of Occupational Health Services in Ireland. Their purpose is to help the worker, people who use Occupational Health Services and the people who provide them understand what a high quality, safe Occupational Health Service looks like.

The standards are introduced within the framework for clinical governance. The objective of this is to set a standard against which the Quality of the Occupational Health Services can be benchmarked.

The standards are grouped according to 5 themes as follows:

- Worker centred care
- Safe and effective care
- Leadership, management and governance
- Workforce planning and resources
- Use of information

5. Recommendations – Standards

5.1 To ensure compliance with the NMBI Practice Standards for Nurses and Midwives.

5.2 To assess compliance with the HSE Safer Better Care Standards for Occupational Health Services 2018.

6. Research

Occupational Health Nursing, similar to all nursing areas must be a research based practice; there is a need for robust evidence showing the contribution of occupational health nursing care to the health of the healthcare worker using the service. Clinical Nurse Specialists are expected to demonstrate audit and research capability as part of their core roles. Similarly, Advance Nurse Practitioners in Occupational Health Nursing are also expected to lead in research methodologies as part of their competency. There is a need to build a body of evidence illustrating the effectiveness of occupational health nursing practice.

Occupational health nursing practice does not occur in isolation, hence the importance of strengthening the nursing agenda at national and international levels. Crucial to the success of a research strategy is the need to develop collaborative partnerships and strategic alliances between institutions and disciplines.

The Workplace Health and Wellbeing Unit model of care focuses on integration of services. It is vital that nursing research is integrated with health and safety activity, rehabilitation services, organisational health, employee assistance programmes, health promotion and wellbeing.

Occupational Health Nursing is in a key position to advance practice and to influence occupational health policy.

In the context of Covid-19 and continuous outbreak management and surveillance a number of sets of data are required for analysis and interpretation, the data sets include index cases, computerized infectious disease reporting, and National Incident Management Systems data. Occupational Health Nurses as key members of the multidisciplinary team are key to the data collection process, data analysis, interpretation and consultation with relevant stakeholders.

6. Recommendations – Research

- 6.1 To develop a research plan for Occupational Health Nursing
- 6.2 To develop a forum for sharing and communication of relevant research and data sets specific for Occupational Health

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Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) (2014) Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Nurses and Registered Midwives. Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland, Dublin.

The World Health Organisation Report (2001) The Role of the Occupational Health Nurse in Healthcare Management. Geneva: WHO

Appendix 1: Current Occupational Health Nursing Career Pathways

Post Title	Professional qualification & education	Career Pathway	Competencies
Registered Nurse	Registered Nurse NMBI	1. Registered Nurse In Occupational Health Services. 2. Work towards post-grad qualification Career pathway to apply for Clinical Nurse Manager or Clinical Nurse Specialist Post or ANP Candidate and other Nursing Roles	<p>Registered Nurses in OHS should develop competency in the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A competency framework refers to the collection of competencies and their indications specifying the expected standards of effective performance. <p>Occupational Health service specific areas of competency include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disease preventable vaccinations. Relevant to work risks • Health Surveillance • Contact tracing • Management of Occupational blood exposure • PEHA screening • Fitness to Work • Case Management for complex health needs • Clinical Assessment • Mental Health Assessment • Technical skill relating to recording audiograms • Skill in audiogram interpretation • Technical skill relating to recording spirometry • Skills in ergonomics • Risk assessment • Health Promotion • Rehabilitation Occupational Health Services workforce planning resource – Occupational Health Service Standards, - safer better care. HSE2018

Post Title	Professional qualification & education	Career Pathway	Competencies
Clinical Nurse Specialist/ CNM2 Grade	Registered Nurse – Post Graduate qualification	Registered Nurse Post Graduate Qualification in Occupational Health Services. Opportunity to apply for CNM3 Grade/ ANP candidate and other nursing roles	As above under Registered Nurse. Core competencies – in addition, clinical, educational, audit research and consultancy
Clinical Nurse Manager 1	Registered Nurse Post Graduate qualification	Career pathway to apply for Clinical Nurse Manager 2 or Clinical Nurse specialist post or CNM3/ANP candidate and other nursing roles	As above under Registered Nurse Competencies. In addition professional and clinical leadership, teaching, staff development, resource management.
Clinical Nurse Manager 2	Registered Nurse Post graduate qualification	Career pathway to Clinical Nurse Manager 2 Post or /ANP candidate role and other Nursing Role	As above under Registered Nurse. In addition, professional responsibilities, clinical leadership, staff development, health and safety management and audit.
Clinical Nurse Manager 3	Registered Nurse - Post Graduate qualification in OHS	Career pathway to Advanced Nurse Practitioner Candidate, Assistant Director of Nursing/Director of Nursing/to other nursing roles	As above under Registered Nurse defined by strategic leadership, clinical leadership, audit, staff development and workforce planning. Leading new initiatives to advance Occupational Health Nursing
Advanced Nurse Practitioner Candidate	RN-Post-grad qualification MSc in Occupational Health or equivalent	Career pathway to other Nursing Roles	As above under Registered Nurse. In addition, leadership capability. Autonomy in clinical practice. Expert practice. Professional and clinical leadership. Research to inform clinical practice.



