



# Healthcare

## 2026 Salary Guide, Ireland

# Healthcare Market Overview

Ireland's healthcare sector continues to face major challenges heading into 2026. Staffing shortages, rising costs, and an ageing population are straining both public and private systems. Over 15% of the population is now aged 65 or older, driving higher demand for hospital, nursing home, and community care.

Despite new facilities and investment, staffing remains the biggest issue. Ireland has around 92,385 nurses and midwives (up 3% from 2024) and 21,000 doctors, yet many roles remain unfilled. Burnout, workload, and living costs are pushing staff to cut hours or leave, while visa costs, housing shortages, and limited career progression make retention of international recruits difficult.

Nursing homes and long-term care providers are under particular strain. Rising costs and a Fair Deal Scheme that hasn't kept pace with inflation have forced some smaller nursing homes to close. Larger private groups are acquiring them, but capacity remains short - the ESRI projects a need for 60% more long-term care beds and home support hours by 2040. Pay gaps between public and private sectors continue to widen, prompting private employers to offer better benefits and flexible work options. Many healthcare professionals are prioritising work-life balance. Technology is helping ease pressures through virtual wards, remote monitoring, and digital systems, creating new admin and tech roles. Overall, 2026 will bring continued pressure but also opportunity - employers investing in retention, flexibility, and strong onboarding are seeing the best results.

- The lifting of the HSE recruitment freeze has helped rebuild staff numbers, but competition for experienced healthcare professionals remains strong. The HSE continues to win on pay and job security, and in many cases environments offering better staffing ratios than in the private sector.
- The new minimum wage of €14.15 per hour, effective from January 2026, is pushing up costs across the private healthcare sector by roughly 8–10%. Average salaries for nurses are now sitting between €44,000 and €48,000, and €33,000–€36,000 for healthcare assistants, depending on experience and region. These pay rises are helping with retention but are also putting pressure on smaller, independent providers.
- Funding continues to be a sticking point in long-term care. The Fair Deal Scheme, now more than 16 years old, still hasn't been properly updated. Industry voices like Shane Scanlon from The Alliance for Nursing Home Care and Tadhg Daly from Nursing Homes Ireland are calling for a new cost-of-care model and an extra €160–€170 million a year to keep the sector sustainable.
- The private healthcare market will keep expanding in 2026, with new nursing homes, sub-acute units, and hospital developments planned nationwide. International recruitment will continue to be central to this growth, supported by better onboarding, sign-on bonuses, and retention incentives.





# Key Trends Shaping the Healthcare Industry

## Market Pressure Still High

Demand for healthcare professionals continues to outstrip supply. Vacancy rates are high, especially for nurses, healthcare assistants, and allied health workers. Hiring processes are taking longer which is adding to this pressure.

## Public vs Private Pay

The pay gap between public/private healthcare has widened to circa 15–20% for many frontline roles. Public sector increases have made the HSE more competitive, while private employers are responding with better rosters, smaller teams, and a stronger focus on culture and flexibility.

## Changing Priorities

A lot of healthcare professionals are prioritising balance over pay. Step-down facilities, home-care roles, and community settings are attracting more candidates because they can offer more flexibility and a better work life balance

## Technology Creating New Roles

Digital transformation is accelerating, with electronic records, virtual wards, and telehealth expanding. Demand is rising for staff with digital skills and adaptability alongside clinical experience.

## Recruitment and Retention Challenges

Demand for nurses, healthcare assistants, and allied health professionals will stay high in 2026. International hiring remains vital, but the 50:50 non-EU staffing rule, high housing costs, and visa hurdles make retention a major challenge.

## Outlook for 2026

With Ireland's population growing and ageing, demand for skilled healthcare staff will keep rising. Excel expects another busy year, with strong demand across temporary and permanent roles. Employers who prioritise flexibility, culture, and retention will be best placed to attract and keep talent.


Healthcare Salary Guide	Low	Average	Good
<b>Residential Care</b>			
Director of Nursing	€82,000	€98,000	€128,000
Assistant Director of Nursing	€65,000	€70,000	€82,000
Clinical Nurse Manager	€25.00 ph	€26.50 ph	€29.50 ph
Senior Staff Nurse	€24.00 ph	€25.50 ph	€27.00 ph
Staff Nurse Day	€21.00 ph	€23.00 ph	€24.50 ph
Staff Nurse Night	€23.00 ph	€24.50 ph	€27.50 ph
<b>Healthcare Assistant Day</b>			
Entry Level	€14.90 ph	€15.20 ph	€15.50 ph
1 - 2 years	€16.00 ph	€16.50 ph	€17.00 ph
3+ years	€17.00 ph	€17.50 ph	€18.00 ph
<b>Healthcare Assistant Night</b>			
Entry Level	€15.00 ph	€16.00 ph	€17.00 ph
1 - 2 years	€16.50 ph	€17.00 ph	€18.00 ph
3+ years	€18.50 ph	€19.00 ph	€19.50 ph
Senior Healthcare Assistant	€16.50 ph	€18.00 ph	€20.00 ph
<b>Office</b>			
Activities Coordinator	€16.20 ph	€17.00 ph	€18.50 ph
Human Resource Manager	€38,000	€44,000	€48,000
Human Resource Administrator	€32,000	€33,000	€35,000
Reception/ Administrator	€30,000	€32,000	€36,000
<b>Catering and Household</b>			
Head/ Senior Chef	€23.00 ph	€24.00 ph	€25.00 ph
Chef	€19.00 ph	€20.00 ph	€21.00 ph
Kitchen Porter	€14.50 ph	€15.00 ph	€15.50 ph
Catering Assistant	€14.50 ph	€15.00 ph	€15.50 ph
Housekeeper/ Cleaner	€14.50 ph	€15.00 ph	€15.50 ph




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