



Public Service Staffing and Pay 2022

Funding the public service is a substantial component of Voted spending in any given year. **The gross cost of the pay for the Public Service** in the *Revised Estimates for Public Services 2022* is over **€21.92 billion**. The public service headcount for 2022 is reported as 380,492 (including Local Authority staff).

There are two primary measures of staffing and it is important to ensure that comparisons between datasets reflect these differing methodologies. These measures are:

- **Headcount** is a simple measure of the total number of employees of a body or bodies without any regard to whether they work full time.
- **Full Time Equivalent**s (FTEs) or **Whole Time Equivalent**s (WTEs) reflect a more nuanced measure of employment.¹

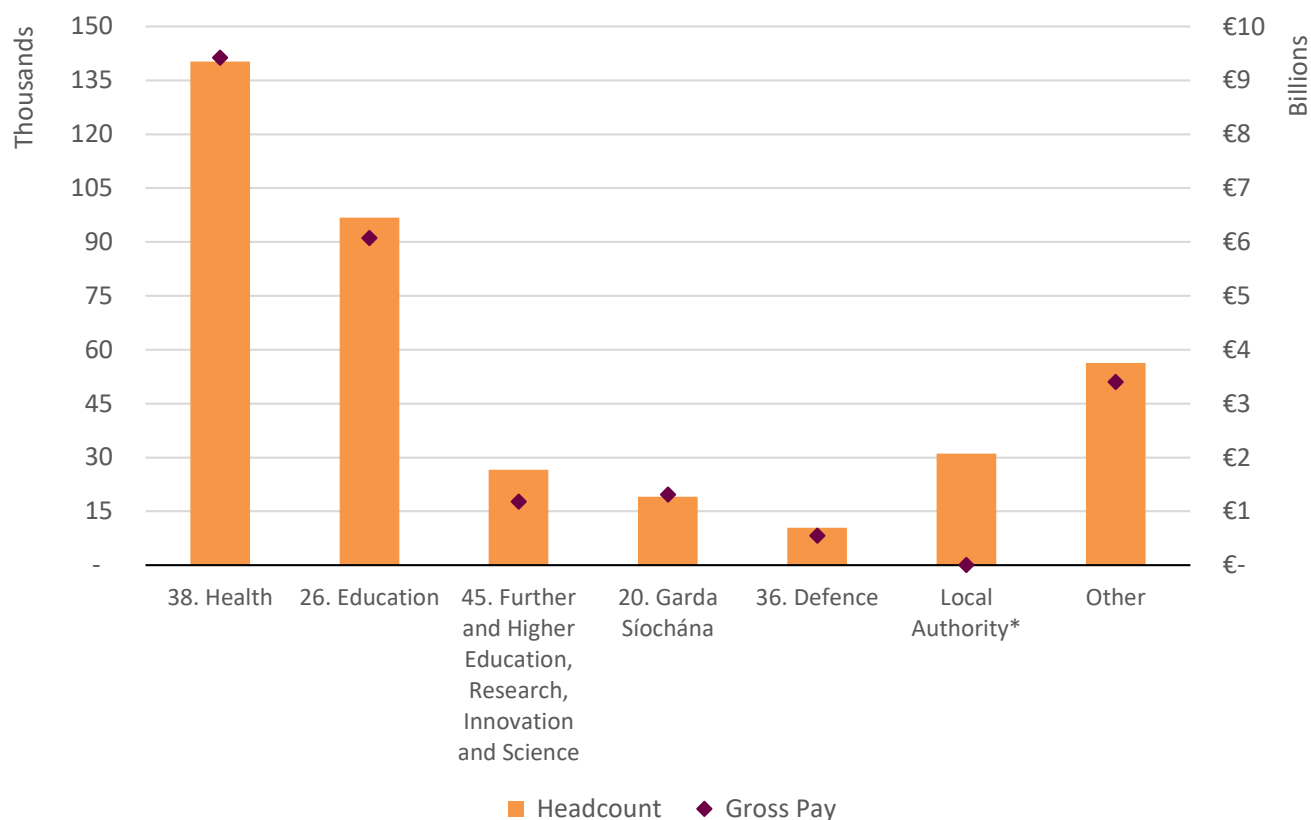
By way of example, in December 2021 the HSE reported a headcount of 150,903 workers; however, these workers represented just 132,323 WTEs.² Detailed dual reporting of headcount and WTE data for all public sector bodies as now done by the HSE would assist the development of a more nuanced understanding of public sector composition and pay.

Figure 1 illustrates the staffing and associated gross pay costs set out for 2022 in the *Revised Estimates for Public Services 2022*. Figure 1 illustrates Votes which employ more than 10,000 persons and an 'Other' category for the staffing and gross pay associated with the remaining Votes. Local Authority staff are public service staff under Vote 34 Housing, Local Government, and Heritage. However, they are illustrated separately in Figure 1 as, while their headcount is reported in the Revised Estimates Volume, their pay is not derived from Vote 34. Instead, Local Authority staff are paid by the Local Authorities. As such, **gross pay reported for 2022 for the public service (€21.92 billion) understates the real level of expenditure on public service pay as it does not include pay for these 31,000 employees.**

¹ PBO, The Irish Public Sector: *An Overview of the Composition of the Public Sector, and of the Development of Exchequer Funded Public Sector Pay* (2021) p.14.

² HSE, *Health Service Personnel Census: December 2021* (accessed 14 February 2021).

Figure 1: Gross Voted Pay & Associated Headcount (2022)



Source: PBO based on [Revised Estimates for Public Services 2022](#) (December 2021).

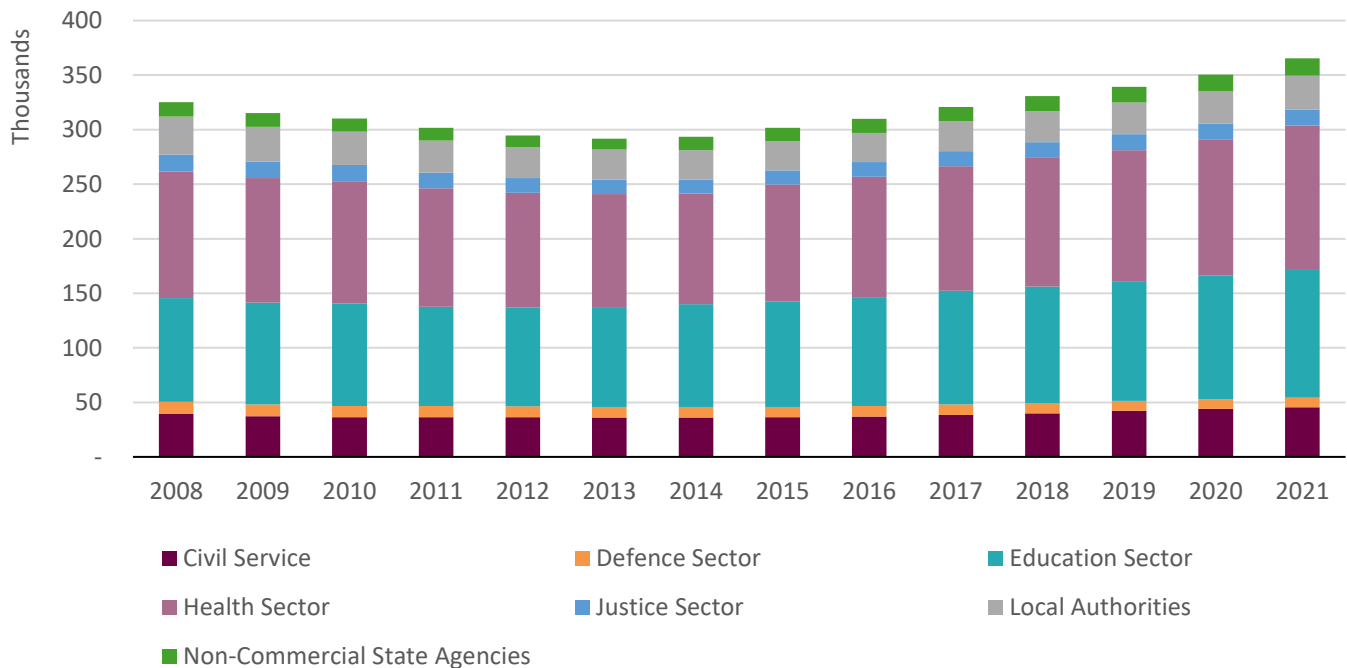
* Local Authority pay is not encompassed by the Revised Estimates. Pay for LA staff does not form part of the allocation to Vote 34 Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Figure 1 illustrates that voted pay is highly concentrated in a small number of Votes. Voted pay (€21.92 billion) is associated with 349,416 public service staff (this figure excludes Local Authority staff). Both (Voted) pay and staffing are highly concentrated:

- **Vote 38 Health:** This Vote employs 40% of public service employees who receive 43% of the 2022 gross Voted pay allocation;
- **Vote 26 Education:** This Vote employs 28% of public service employees who receive 28% of the 2022 gross Voted pay allocation;
- **Vote 45 Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science:** This Vote employs 8% of public service employees who receive 5% of the 2022 gross Voted pay allocation;
- **Vote 20 Garda Síochána:** This vote employs 5% of public service employees who receive 6% of the 2022 gross Voted pay allocation;
- **Vote 36 Defence:** This vote employs 3% of public service employees who receive 2% of the 2022 gross Voted pay allocation; and
- **Other:** The remaining Votes employ 16% of public service employees who receive 16% of the 2022 gross Voted pay allocation.

Figure 2 illustrates the sectoral composition of the public sector during the period 2008 to 2021. A trough in public sector employment resulted from the “great recession”, with public sector employment declining annually for the period 2008-2013. In this period WTE employment declined by 33,278.8 – most notably in the Health (-12,175.2) and Local Authority (-7,464) sectors. From Q4 2013 to Q4 2021 public sector employment has grown by 73,426 WTEs, this growth is primarily associated with the Health (+28,742.8) and Education (+25,459.1) sectors.

Figure 2: Public Sector Employment (WTE) by Sector at end Q4 (2008 - 2021)



Source: PBO based on DPER databank.

Table 1 (below) sets out public sector employment (in whole time equivalents) by sector in Q4 of 2008, 2013 and 2021. **2013 represents the lowest level of employment for the period covered (just below 292,000 WTEs).** Also shown are how employment levels in Q4 2013 compare to Q4 2008 (down by more than 33,000 WTEs), and how employment in Q4 2021 compares to Q4 2013 (the lowest recorded level), having increased by over 73,000. This reflects a **net increase over the period Q4 2008 to Q4 2021 of more than 40,000 WTEs.**

Table 1: Whole Time Equivalents by Sector in Q4 (2008, 2013 and 2021)

	End Q4-2008	End Q4-2013	End Q4-2021	Change Q4-2008 to Q4-2013	Change Q4-2013 to Q4-2021
Civil Service	39,313.09	36,117.79	45,636.56	(3,195.30)	9,518.77
Defence Sector	11,265	9,796.60	8,848.16	(1,468.40)	(948.44)
Education Sector	95,024.34	91,589.84	117,048.95	(3,434.50)	25,459.11
Health Sector	115,755.35	103,580.20	132,322.99	(12,175.15)	28,742.79
Justice Sector	15,691.5	13,020.50	14,584.80	(2,671.00)	1,564.30
Local Authorities	35,007.53	27,543.51	30,998.18	(7,464.02)	3,454.67
NCSA	13,060.39	10,189.95	15,824.77	(2,870.44)	5,634.82
Total	325,117.20	291,838.39	365,264.41	(33,278.81)	73,426.02

Source: PBO based on DPER databank.



**Tithe an
Oireachtais
Houses of the
Oireachtas**

An Oifig Buiséid Pharlaiminteach Parliamentary Budget Office

For more detailed analysis of the composition of the Irish public sector and the associated pay costs please see the Parliamentary Budget Office's paper [*The Irish Public Sector: An Overview of the Composition of the Public Sector, and of the Development of Exchequer Funded Public Sector Pay*](#) (2021).