



Comhairle na
nDochtúirí Leighis
Medical Council

Doctors Clinically Active Abroad Only and Doctors not Clinically Active in 2025

Supplementary Workforce Report

Introduction

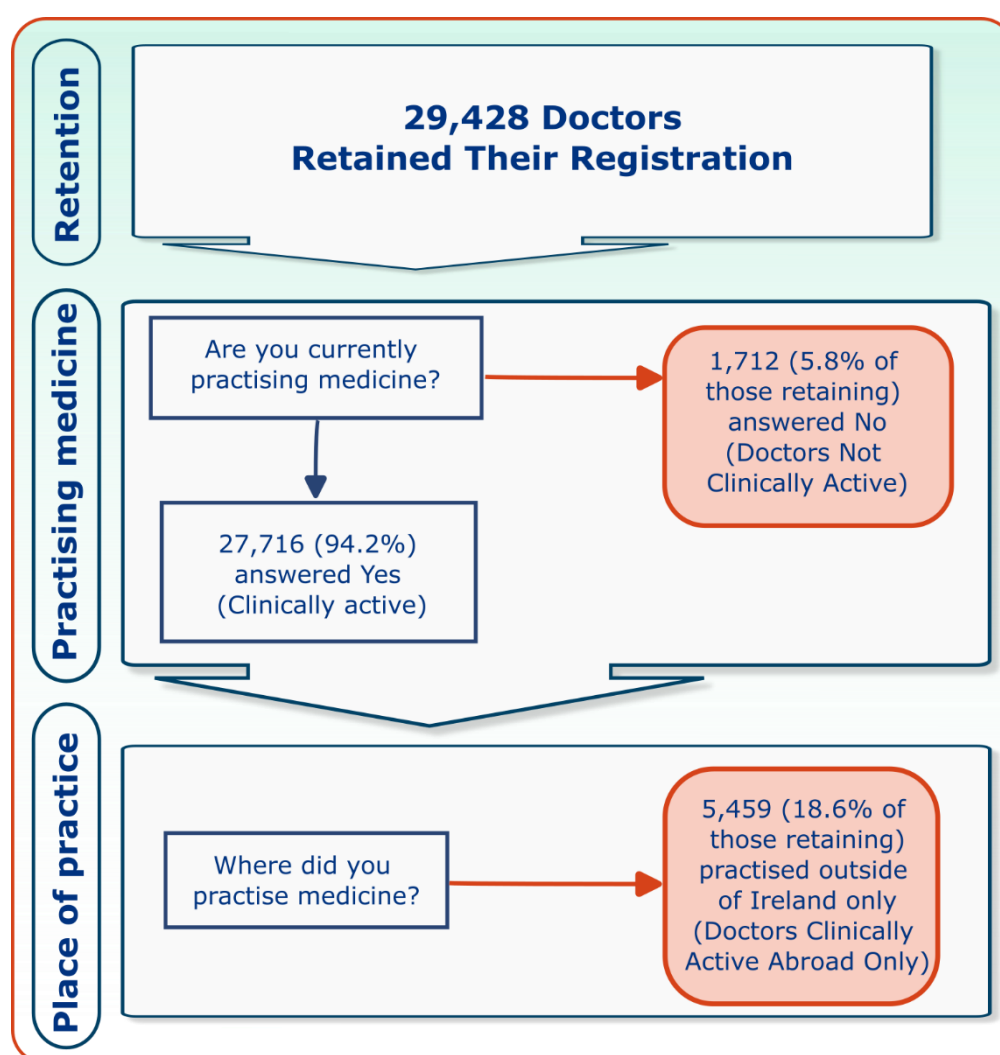
Further to data released in the Medical Council's 2025 Medical Workforce Intelligence Report, we are pleased to publish this supplementary workforce research. Throughout the year the Medical Council will be publishing a number of brief supplementary reports to spotlight particular cohorts of doctors, including those working abroad and those not practising as well as doctors joining and leaving the Register. Through these shorter reports, we aim to highlight opportunities, trends, and challenges within the medical workforce in Ireland.

In 2025, 29,428 doctors retained their place on the Medical Council's Register. Not all doctors who retain their place on the Register actively practise medicine in the Republic of Ireland and this supplementary report provides a description of two cohorts of doctors who retained their place on the Register but were not clinically active in Ireland in 2025:

1. Doctors who were not clinically active at all (non-practising)
2. Doctors who were clinically active outside the Republic of Ireland only (overseas registrants)

In 2025, 5.8% of those retaining reported not practising medicine and a further 18.6% reported practising outside of Ireland only. For further information on the Medical Council's retention process and how our data was filtered please consult the main 2025 Workforce Intelligence Report.

Figure 1. Filtering Non-practising and Overseas Registrants Data



Doctors Not Clinically Active

In 2025, there were 1,712 doctors who retained their registration but reported not practising medicine ('doctors not clinically active'). This represents 5.8% of those retaining and Table 1 shows demographic and registration division details on this cohort. Notably, when compared to 2024 this represents a very slight increase from 5.5% of those retaining.

The mean age of this cohort was 43.6 years (SD = 15.4 years) and the majority were in the younger group of 34 years and younger ($n = 673$, 39.3%). One quarter of this cohort were aged 55 and older and thus approaching the typical retirement age ($n = 428$, 25.0%). Closer inspection of this group shows that just under 5% of the full cohort were aged 75 and older ($n = 82$, 4.8%). When compared with the same time in 2024 the proportion of those in the youngest group increased in 2025 and the proportion of those aged 55 and older decreased.

There was a majority of females ($n = 1,075$, 62.8%), and most doctors were registered on the General Division ($n = 1,087$, 63.5%).

Doctors who qualified in Ireland comprised the largest proportion of the cohort, accounting for 44.9% ($n = 768$), while doctors qualified in the EU or UK accounted for 14.4% ($n = 246$), and international doctors represented the remaining 40.8% ($n = 698$). From those who had an international qualification, the majority obtained their primary medical degree in Pakistan ($n = 289$, 41.4%).

Table 1. Doctors not Clinically Active

Not Clinically Active Doctors (n = 1,712)		
Age	Mean	SD
	43.6	15.4
Age group	n	%
34 and younger	673	39.3
35 to 44	443	25.9
45 to 54	168	9.8
55 to 64	157	9.2
65 to 74	189	11.0
75 +	82	4.8
Gender	n	%
Male	637	37.2
Female	1,075	62.8
Division	n	%
Trainee Specialist	145	8.5
Supervised	2	0.1
General	1,087	63.5
Specialist	478	27.9
BMQ	n	%
Irish	768	44.9
EU or UK	246	14.4
International	698	40.8
Top 5 Qualification Countries of International Graduates	n	%
Pakistan	289	41.4
Sudan	226	32.4
South Africa	26	3.7
India	24	3.4
Egypt	22	3.2

When retaining their registration, all doctors are asked to report their current or most recent area of practice of medicine. For this cohort not currently practising, in relation to medical disciplines, most doctors reported their most recent area of practice as falling within the discipline of medicine ($n = 492$, 28.7%), general practice ($n = 346$, 20.2%) or surgery ($n = 181$, 10.6%) (see Table 2).

Table 2. Most Recent Medical Discipline of Doctors not Clinically Active

Medical Discipline	N	%
Anaesthesiology	82	4.8
Emergency Medicine	113	6.6
General Practice	346	20.2
Medicine	492	28.7
Obstetrics and Gynaecology	63	3.7
Occupational Medicine	8	0.5
Ophthalmology	21	1.2
Paediatrics	110	6.4
Pathology	46	2.7
Psychiatry	121	7.1
Public Health Medicine	42	2.5
Radiology	32	1.9
Sports and Exercise Medicine	2	0.1
Surgery	181	10.6
Limited Scope	53	3.1
Total	1,712	100.0

Note. 53 doctors declared a previous scope of practice that was limited to urgent care only, aesthetics only, gynaecology only or medicolegal only. These doctors are grouped under limited scope.

Doctors Clinically Active Abroad Only

In 2025, there were 5,459 doctors who were clinically active abroad only. This represents 18.6% of those retaining their place on the Register and is an increase from 15.6% in 2024. The mean age of this group was 42.3 years (SD = 11.7 years) and 32.2% were aged 34 years and younger ($n = 1,760$).

Just under two thirds were male ($n = 3,552$, 65.1%), and the majority were registered on the General Division ($n = 3,853$, 70.6%). Most doctors had obtained their basic medical qualification outside of Ireland, the EU or the UK ($n = 3,404$, 62.4%), and of these almost half 47.1% ($n = 1,601$) had graduated in Pakistan.

Table 3 offers more detailed information on demographics and registration division.

Table 3. Clinically Active Doctors Abroad Only

Doctors Clinically Active Abroad Only (n = 5,459)		
Age	Mean	SD
	42.3	11.7
Age group	n	%
34 and younger	1,760	32.2
35 to 44	1,621	29.7
45 to 54	1,144	21.0
55 to 64	696	12.7
65 to 74	202	3.7
75 and older	36	0.7
Gender	n	%
Male	3,552	65.1
Female	1,907	34.9
Division	n	%
Trainee Specialist	45	0.8
Supervised	7	0.1
General	3,853	70.6
Specialist	1,554	28.5
BMQ	n	%
Irish	882	16.2
EU or UK	1,173	21.5
International	3,404	62.4
Top 5 Qualification Countries of International Graduates	n	%
Pakistan	1,601	47.1
Sudan	695	20.4
South Africa	325	9.6
Egypt	127	3.7
India	97	2.9

In relation to medical disciplines, most doctors were practising in the area of medicine ($n = 1,315$, 24.1%), surgery ($n = 901$, 16.5%) and general practice ($n = 829$, 15.2%) (see Table 4).

Table 4. Medical Discipline of Clinically Active Doctors Abroad Only

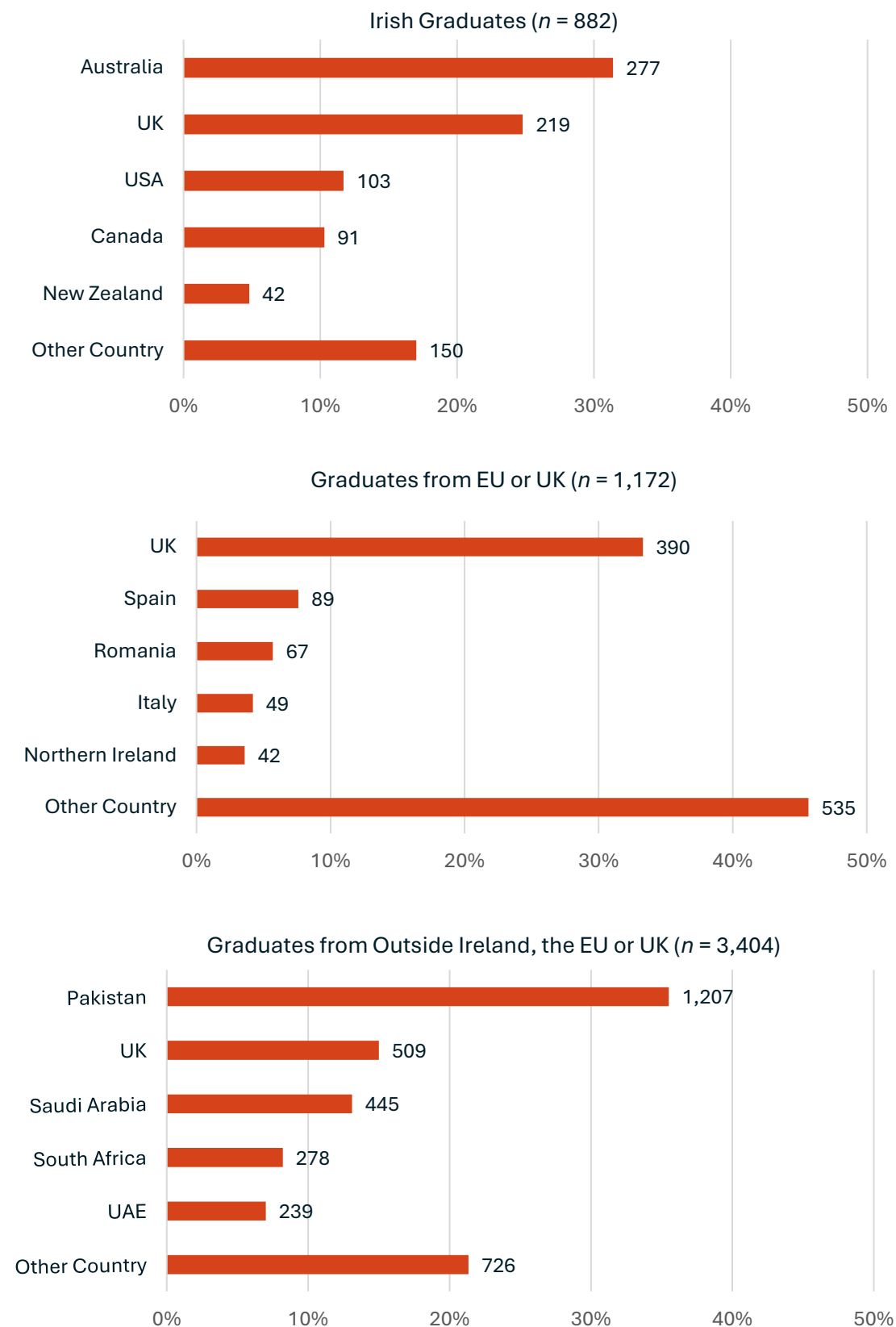
Medical Discipline	n	%
Anaesthesiology	524	9.6
Emergency Medicine	424	7.8
General Practice	829	15.2
Medicine	1,315	24.1
Obstetrics and Gynaecology	235	4.3
Occupational Medicine	32	0.6
Ophthalmology	57	1.0
Paediatrics	308	5.6
Pathology	109	2.0
Psychiatry	244	4.5
Public Health Medicine	21	0.4
Radiology	332	6.1
Sports and Exercise Medicine	6	0.1
Surgery	901	16.5
Limited Scope	120	2.2
Total	5,457	100.0

Note. 120 doctors declared a previous scope of practice that was limited to urgent care only, aesthetics only, gynaecology only or medicolegal only. These doctors are grouped under limited scope. Data on area of practice was missing for 2 doctors practising outside of the Republic of Ireland in 2025.

Doctors who reported working abroad only were asked to report the country in which they practise medicine. This information was then cross tabulated with qualification categories which was grouped as doctors with an Irish qualification, doctors with a qualification from either the EU or UK, or doctors with a qualification from outside of Ireland, the EU or the UK (international). For the purposes of reporting, doctors practising in Northern Ireland are counted separately from those practising in the rest of the United Kingdom. Results are shown in Figure 1.

For doctors with an Irish qualification, the most common destinations where they worked were either Australia ($n = 277$, 31.4%) or the United Kingdom ($n = 219$, 24.8%). Taken together this suggests that more than half of doctors with Irish qualifications working abroad are based in Australia and the UK. A third of doctors with qualifications from the EU or UK ($n = 390$, 33.3%) also worked in the United Kingdom. For doctors with international qualifications, slightly over a third worked in Pakistan ($n = 1,207$, 35.5%) and a further 15.0% ($n = 509$) worked in the United Kingdom. This suggests that just over a half of international graduates, working abroad only are based in either Pakistan or the UK.

Figure 1. Top 5 Countries of Practice by Qualification Category



Note. Data on country of practice was missing for one EU or UK Graduate.

Conclusion

This supplementary report highlights that not all doctors retaining their place on the Register are actively practising medicine in the Republic of Ireland.

In 2025, 29,428 doctors retained their place on the Register and almost one quarter ($n = 7,171$, 24.4%) were either practising medicine abroad only ($n = 5,459$) or not actively practising medicine ($n = 1,712$). The demographic breakdown of these cohorts varies to that of the clinically active workforce in Ireland. Doctors actively practising in Ireland were more evenly split in terms of gender, and had a higher proportion of specialist division doctors and Irish graduates than doctors who were not practising or practising abroad only.

Notably, there was a higher proportion of female doctors among those not practising and a higher proportion of male doctors among those who were practising abroad only.

The proportion of doctors not practising has increased very slightly from 5.5% in 2024 to 5.8% in 2025. The proportion of doctors practising abroad only has increased from 15.6% of those retaining in 2024 to 18.6% of those retaining in 2025. A driving force here appears to be the increased proportion of international medical graduates, many of whom qualified in and are practising in Pakistan.

Of note, 22,257 doctors were clinically active within the Republic of Ireland, all or some of the time in 2025. This cohort is explored in detail within our main Medical Workforce Intelligence report.



Comhairle na
nDochtúirí Leighis
Medical Council

Medical Council

Kingram House
Kingram Place
Dublin 2
D02 XY88

research@mcirl.ie
www.medicalcouncil.ie