

ANALYSIS · PUBLISHED 2025 · UPDATED 2026

Nurse Demand Analysis 2025 – 2030

How many practical nurses does the elderly care sector in Finland need over the next five years, how many are graduating and staying in the profession, and what shortfall emerges.

1. Executive summary

KEY FINDING

As the population of Finnish residents over 80 grows from **359 728** in 2025 to **468 925** by 2030, and the caregiver ratio stays at 0.6 nurses per resident in care, the Finnish elderly care sector needs more than **28 500** additional practical nurses over 2025 – 2030, in elderly care alone. Approximately **7 000** practical nurses graduate in Finland every year, but only **60 %** take up work in the field. The net annual intake into the profession (~4 200) is not enough to cover the new demand and retirements combined. The cumulative shortfall reaches nearly **15 000 nurses** by 2030.

209 253 REGISTERED PRACTICAL NURSES 2025	2 342 OPEN PRACTICAL NURSE POSITIONS	7 000 GRADUATE YEARLY (60 % ENTER THE FIELD)	~15 000 CUMULATIVE SHORTFALL BY 2030
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This analysis looks only at **practical nurses in elderly care**. The needs of registered nurses, primary healthcare, hospitals, and children's services are not included, so the overall shortfall is larger in reality.

2. Current situation

Finland has **209 253** registered practical nurses (Valvira). Not all are in the workforce: some have moved to other fields, some work part time, some are outside the labour market. The register does not equal available labour supply.

According to the employment authority, **2 342** practical nurse positions are open. The figure fluctuates seasonally, but the trend has been consistently over one thousand in recent years.

Practical nurse retirements per year

YEAR	RETIREMENTS
2025	2 167
2026	2 108
2027	1 963
2028	1 889
2029	1 716

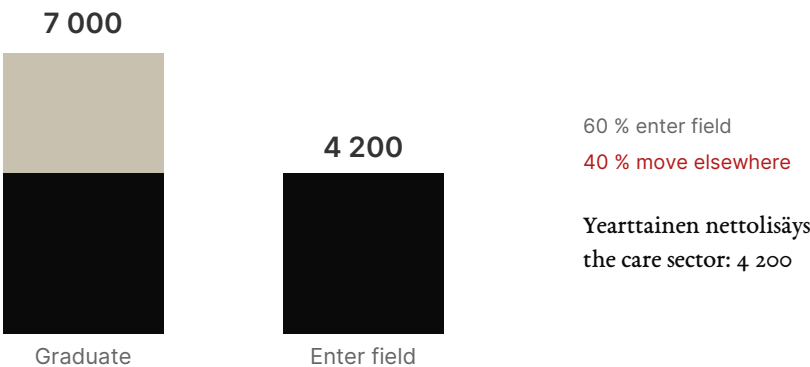
YEAR	RETIREMENTS
2030	1 708
Total	11 551

Source: KEVA, labour force outflow estimates for practical nurses.

Graduates and entry into the field

Approximately **7 000** practical nurses graduate every year in Finland. Not all move into the field: **around 40 %** continue studies elsewhere or do not take up care work (Yle 2023). The net annual entry into the profession is therefore about **4 200 nurses**.

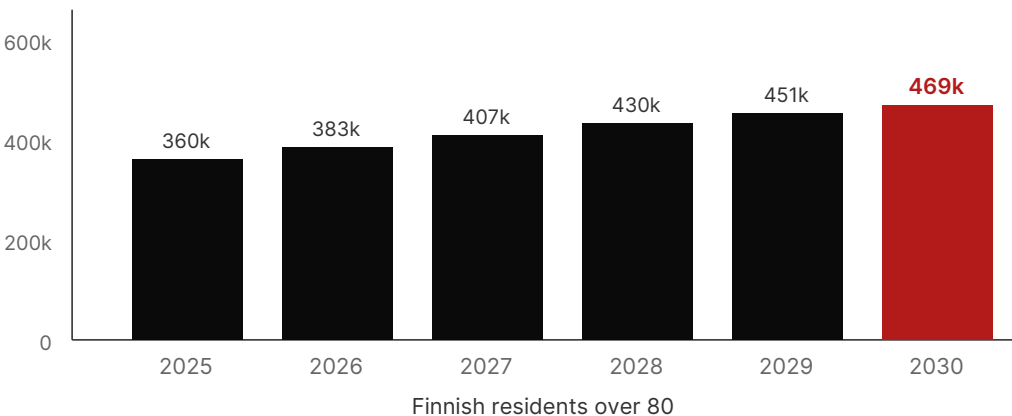
Graduates entering the profession



3. Yeartarve 2025 – 2030

Finland’s population aged over 80 grows by nearly **110 000 people** in five years (Statistics Finland). When we assume **40 %** of the over-80 population needs regular care services and use the mandated caregiver ratio of **0.6** nurses per resident, we get an annual practical nurse demand.

Population growth in the over-80 age group



Source: Statistics Finland, population forecast 2024. Growth of 109 197 people.

Nurse demand, graduates, and the emerging shortfall

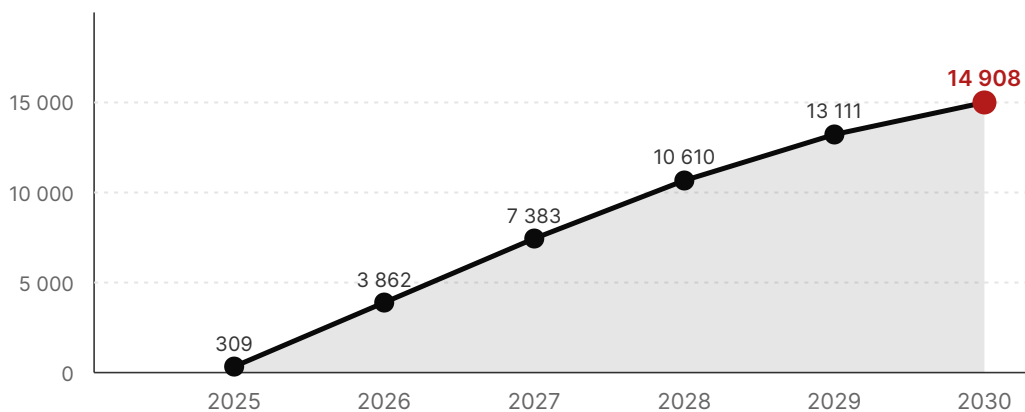
YEAR	OVER-80	IN NEED OF CARE (40 %)	NURSES REQUIRED (0.6)	RETIREMENTS	NEW DEMAND	ENTERING FIELD	YEAR-VAJE
2025	359 728	143 891	86 335	2 167	2 342	4 200	309
2026	383 247	153 299	91 979	2 108	5 645	4 200	3 553
2027	407 239	162 896	97 737	1 963	5 758	4 200	3 521
2028	430 315	172 126	103 276	1 889	5 538	4 200	3 227
2029	451 086	180 434	108 261	1 716	4 985	4 200	2 501
2030	468 925	187 570	112 542	1 708	4 281	4 200	1 797
Total				11 551	28 549	25 200	14 908

Sources: Statistics Finland, Valvira, KEVA, employment authority, Yle 2023.

4. The emerging shortfall

Yearvaje pysyy vuoden 2025 poikkeuksen jälkeen tuhansissa. Kumulatiivisena tämä tarkoittaa, että vuoteen 2030 mennessä care-alalta puuttuu **lähes 15 000 lähihoitajaa**.

Cumulative shortfall of practical nurses 2025 – 2030



Cumulative shortfall of practical nurses, people

Yearvajeiden summa. Vaikka valmistuvien nettomäärä (4 200) alkaa in 2028 – 2030 tasoittaa tilannetta, kumulatiivinen vaje ei enää palaudu.

5. How the estimate of care service need was constructed

As the population ages, the need for care services among people over 80 grows substantially. There is no single national statistic for service use, so we constructed a reasoned estimate by comparing available sources and using the calculated average.

Use of care services among people over 75

PERIOD / SOURCE	SHARE
2010, Finland's six largest cities (home care, outpatient services, 24-hour care)	24,8 %
2020, use of regular care services among over-75s	~30 %
Over-80uotiaat, saatavien tilastojen alaraja	~35 %
Over-80uotiaat, saatavien tilastojen yläraja	~45 %
Average used	40 %

Over-80uotiaiden palveluntarve on suurempi kuin 75 – 79-vuotiailla, koska toimintakyvyn heikkeneminen kiihtyy. Perustellun arvion mukaan yli 80-vuotiaista **35 – 45 %** tarvitsee säännöllisesti kotihoitoa, palvelukotia tai ympärivuorokautista carea. Analyysissä käytämme keskiarvoa **40 %**.

The caregiver ratio used is **0.6 nurses per resident in round-the-clock care**, which is the mandated Finnish minimum under current legislation.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

Three recommendations for employers and policymakers

Any delay produces cumulative shortfall that does not recover. The recommendations are aimed at all care service employers (municipalities, wellbeing regions, private providers) and policymakers.

Recommendation 1: Labour-based immigration as a structural solution

Yearvajeen kattamiseen tarvitaan **vähintään 3 000 lisähoitajaa vuosittain** muualta kuin nykyisestä koulutusputkesta. Se tarkoittaa käytännössä hyvin organisoituja koulutusohjelmia lähtömaassa ja pätevöitymisen tunnustamista Suomessa. Piste- ja kertaluontoiset rekrytoinnit eivät riitä.

Recommendation 2: Improve retention of new graduates

- **Only 60 % of graduates** enter the field. That share needs to be raised.
- **More apprenticeships** and pay development can help.
- **A permanent training pathway from abroad to Finland** needs to run continuously, not be switched on and off.

Recommendation 3: Technology to lighten the workload

- **Automation and digital tools** can reduce tasks that would otherwise require additional hands.
- **Remote care models and AI-assisted documentation** reduce the nurse's administrative time and release it back to direct patient work.

If nothing is done, the nurse shortage becomes critical by 2028. Action is needed immediately if the care sector is to remain sustainable. Above all, the models that already work need to be used continuously, not activated only when workers are needed urgently next week.

7. How Healthcare Staffing Solutions responds to the need

Healthcare Staffing Solutions Oy (HSS) is a training organisation owned by the Mehiläinen group. We build complete training pathways for international practical nurse students. Operations began in early 2020; more than 1 000 students have completed the programme since then.

Two pathways

PATHWAY		TARGET GROUP	DURATION
Pathway A	Students living outside the EU: Finnish language, vocational studies, and clinical placement before employment		12 – 24 months
Pathway B	Immigrants already living in Finland: language development to the level required for work		6 – 12 months

How the programme is built

- **Finnish for healthcare:** structured pathway from A0 to B1, focused on the vocabulary of care. AI-assisted assessment of written exercises, tailored listening exercises.
- **Vocational studies in 11 weeks:** 735 tracked interactive exercises, hygiene passport preparation included.
- **Four-stage selection process:** application, entrance exam, weekly assessments, and evaluation of cultural adaptation.
- **Vocational college partnership:** HSS teaches, a Finnish vocational college validates the qualification so it is recognised by Valvira.

Evidence

1000+ STUDENTS SINCE 2020	~100 % RETENTION IN FIRST WORKPLACE	6 – 24 kk PROGRAMME DURATION BY PATHWAY	0 € COST TO THE STUDENT
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8. Methods and sources

Figures used

- Registered practical nurses (209 253): Valvira
- Open practical nurse positions (2 342): Finnish employment authority
- Retirement figures per year: KEVA, labour force outflow forecast
- Yearvalmistuneet lähihoitajat (7 000) ja alalle jäävien osuus (60 %): Yle 2023, yle.fi/a/74-20030150
- Population forecast for over-80s: Statistics Finland, population forecast 2024
- Caregiver ratio of 0.6: Finnish Act on Supporting the Functional Capacity of the Ageing Population

Grounds for the care service estimate

- Comparison of elderly social and health services in Finland's six largest cities, 2010: hel.fi/hel2/tietokeskus/Kuusikko_vanhuspalvelut_2010.pdf
- Annukka Aari: Move of the elderly to round-the-clock service housing: theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/811675/Aari_Annukka.pdf
- Nina Martikainen: Experiences of families on round-the-clock care placement in Sipoo: theseus.fi/bitstream/10024/782310/2/Martikainen_Nina.pdf

Other sources

- MDI: mdi.fi/vaestoenuste
- Demographic dependency ratio: Statistics Finland / Dependency ratio
- Avoindata.fi

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