Comhairle na nDochtúirí Leighis
Medical Council

Doctors Leaving the Register in 2025

Supplementary Workforce Report

Introduction

This supplementary workforce report provides a description of doctors who left the Medical Council's Register in 2025. This includes doctors who were removed for not fulfilling their registration requirements during the annual retention period, and doctors who voluntarily withdrew during the 2025 calendar year. These two cohorts comprise a total of 2,501 doctors. An overview of both cohorts can be found in the content that follows.

For those who voluntarily withdrew, additional details on reasons for leaving the Register are provided, as this is collected as part of the withdrawal request. This detail is not collected from doctors who were removed.

Doctors Removed from the Register

In order to practise medicine in the Republic of Ireland doctors must complete the annual retention process and pay the relevant fee to maintain their name on the Medical Council's Register between May and August each year. If a doctor does not complete this process they are removed from the Register. Doctors must also have the minimum level of professional indemnity in place and can be removed for not meeting this requirement. In 2025, a total of 788 doctors were removed.

Table 1 offers a description of this cohort. The mean age of removed doctors was 40.0 years (SD = 14.0) and slightly more than half (*n* = 402, 51.0%) were 34 and younger. Just over two thirds (*n* = 506, 64.2%) were male, and 78.4% (*n* = 618) were registered on the General Division. Based on where doctors obtained their Basic Medical Qualifications (BMQ), 52.4% (*n* = 413) had international qualifications. From this sub-group of removed doctors with international BMQ, 57.9% (*n* = 239) were from Pakistan.

Table 1. Doctors Removed from the Register

Doctors Removed from the Register (n = 788)		
Age	**Mean**	**SD**
	40.0	14.0
Age group	**N**	**%**
34 and younger	402	51.0
35 to 44	166	21.1
45 to 54	80	10.2
55 and older	140	17.8
Gender	**N**	**%**
Male	506	64.2
Female	282	35.8
Division	**N**	**%**
Trainee Specialist	7	0.9
General	618	78.4
Specialist	163	20.7
BMQ	**N**	**%**
Irish	194	24.6
EU or UK	181	23
International	413	52.4
Top 5 Countries of International Graduates	**N**	**%**
Pakistan	239	57.9
Sudan	54	13.1
South Africa	33	8.0
Egypt	12	2.9
China	11	2.7

Just under 60% (*n* = 458, 58.1%) of doctors who were removed from the Register had joined for the first time in the previous three years (since 2022). This was more pronounced among General

Division doctors than doctors on the Specialist Division with almost two-thirds joining in the previous three years (see table 2).

Table 2. Years Since First Registration among Doctors on the General and Specialist Division Removed from the Register

	General		Specialist	
	n	%	n	%
3 years or less	407	65.9	51	31.3
More than 3 years	211	34.1	112	68.7

Voluntary Withdrawals from the Register

In 2025, 1,713 doctors voluntarily withdraw their registration from the Medical Council. As can be observed in Table 3, the mean age of this group of doctors was 37.8 years (SD = 12.9) and 58.8% (*n* = 1,007) were 34 or younger, and in terms of gender, 60.8% (*n* = 1,041) were male. In relation to the Division from which they withdrew, 77.4% (*n* = 1,326) were registered on the General Division, and almost 1 in 5 (*n* = 341, 19.9%) were on the Specialist Division. Over 60% (*n* = 1,074, 62.7%) of doctors had international BMQ, and from this sub-group, 71.6% (*n* = 769) had obtained their qualifications from Pakistan.

Table 3. Doctors Voluntarily Withdrawing from the Register

Doctors Voluntarily Withdrawing from the Register (n = 1,713)		
Age	**Mean**	**SD**
	37.8	12.9
Age group	**n**	**%**
34 and younger	1,007	58.8
35 to 44	344	20.1
45 to 54	116	6.8
55 and older	246	14.4
Gender	**n**	**%**
Male	1,041	60.8
Female	672	39.2
Division	**n**	**%**
Trainee Specialist	16	0.9
Supervised	10	0.6
General	1,326	77.4
Specialist	341	19.9
Intern	20	1.2
BMQ	**n**	**%**
Irish	319	18.6
EU or UK	320	18.7
International	1,074	62.7
Top 5 Countries of International Graduates	**n**	**%**
Pakistan	769	71.6
Sudan	89	8.3
China	53	4.9
South Africa	53	4.9
Egypt	17	1.6

Just over 60% of doctors (*n* = 1,092, 63.7%) voluntarily withdrawing from the Register had joined for the first time in the previous three years (since 2022). This was more pronounced among General Division doctors than doctors on the Specialist Division with almost three-quarters of doctors on the General Division joining in the previous three years (see table 4).

Table 4. Years Since First Registration among Doctors on the General and Specialist Division who Voluntarily Withdrew from the Register

	General		Specialist	
	N	%	n	%
3 years or less	984	74.2	82	24.0
More than 3 years	342	25.8	259	76.0

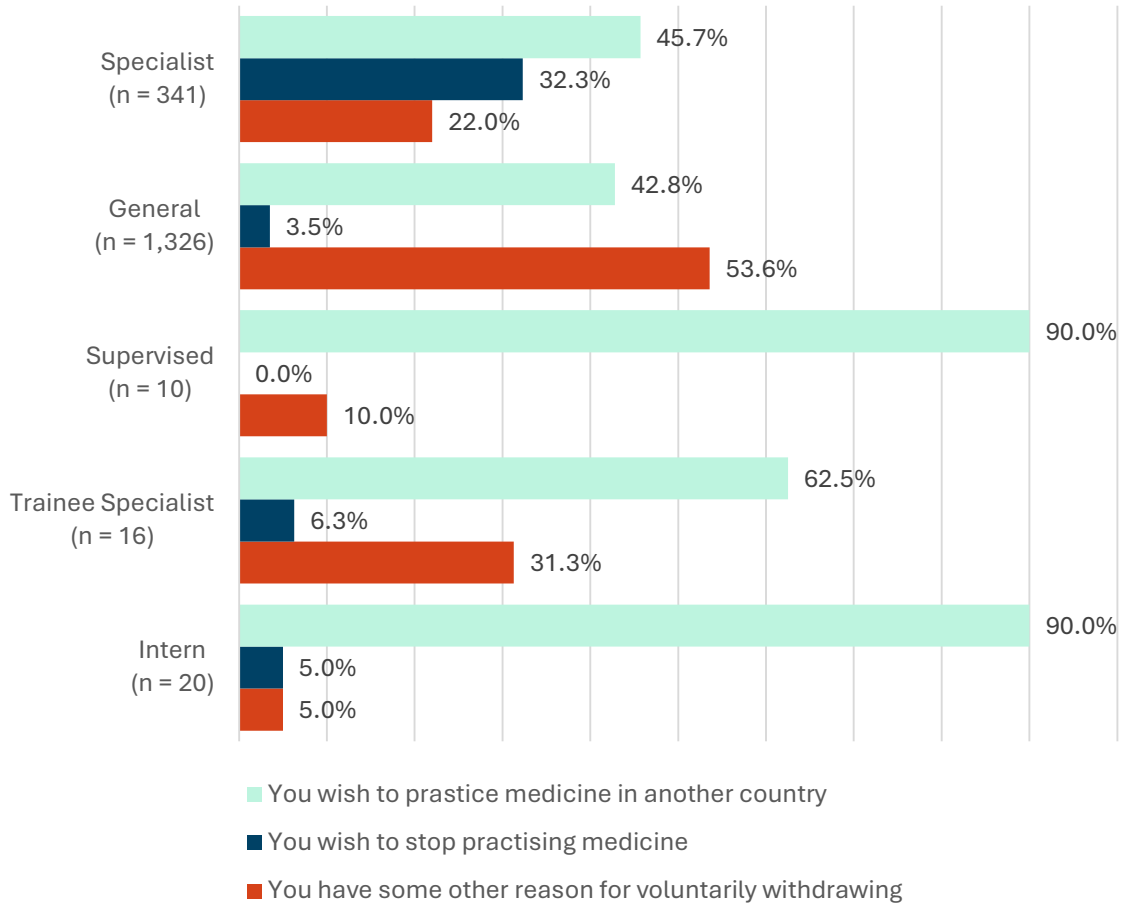
Reason for Withdrawal

When doctors voluntarily withdraw, they are asked to provide their primary reason and can choose from the following options: wishing to practice medicine in another country, wishing to stop practising medicine, and having some other reason for voluntarily withdrawing. This question is mandatory as part of the voluntary withdrawal process and provides a good overview of doctors' reasons for leaving the Register.

The most common reason for doctors requesting their withdrawal from the Register was "other reasons" (*n* = 793, 46.3%), followed by "wishing to practise medicine in another country" (*n* = 761, 44.4%). A minority chose "wishing to stop practising medicine" (*n* = 159, 9.3%). These reasons, however, varied depending on the division doctors were registered in. Figure 1 below shows the percentage of withdrawal reasons by division.

As can be observed in Figure 1, the majority of doctors in the Supervised, Training Specialist, and Intern Divisions withdrew because they wanted to practise medicine in another country. Conversely, over half of doctors on the General Division reported they had some other reason for leaving the Register (*n* = 711, 53.6%). From the Specialist Division 45.7% (*n* = 156) of doctors wished to practise medicine in another country, 32.3% (*n* = 110) wanted to stop practising medicine, and 22.0% (*n* = 75) reported they have some other reason.

Figure 1. Withdrawal Reasons by Division



Doctors who chose the option "wishing to practise medicine in another country" were asked to indicate which country they wished to practise in[1]. From the 761 doctors who wished to practise abroad, data was available for 706 doctors and results are shown in Table 3. The destination country where most doctors were leaving to was the United Kingdom (*n* = 215, 30.5%), followed by Pakistan (*n* = 120, 17.0%) and Australia (*n* = 87, 12.3%).

[1] This follow up question was added in May 2025 and as such data was not captured for anyone who completed the withdrawal process prior to this.

Table 2. Destination Countries for Doctors Wishing to Practise Abroad

Withdrawal country	N	%
United Kingdom	215	30.5
Pakistan	120	17.0
Australia	87	12.3
Canada	45	6.4
South Africa	26	3.7
Spain	26	3.7
United States of America	24	3.4
Saudi Arabia	20	2.8
Romania	15	2.1
New Zealand	13	1.8
United Arab Emirates	10	1.4
Germany	9	1.3
Italy	9	1.3
Portugal	8	1.1
Other countries	79	10.8
Total	**706**	**100**

Note. Data was not available for 55 doctors.

Doctors leaving the Register were also asked to select what were the main influences on their decision to voluntarily withdraw (this was an optional question). They were offered a number of options to select from (Table 4). It should be noted that from the end of May 2025 onwards**,** doctors filling in this information were allowed to choose more than one option. Those answers are grouped under the category "multiple reasons". Prior to this, doctors could only select one reason from the list.

As observed in Table 4, the majority of doctors (*n* = 630, 39.1%) reported they had some other reason to leave (meaning not any of the other reasons listed). This was followed by just over a quarter of doctors (*n* = 426, 26.4%) reporting having family or personal reasons.

Table 3. Main Reasons Influencing Decision to Leave the Register

Main Influences on Leaving	N	%
I have some other reason for making a voluntary withdrawal	630	39.1
I have family/personal reasons for making a voluntary withdrawal	426	26.4
Multiple reasons	229	14.2
I am retiring	135	8.4
There are limited career progression opportunities available	91	5.6
I am changing to a role that doesn't require me to be registered	52	3.2
I feel I can earn more abroad	22	1.4
I do not have flexible training options	14	0.9
My employer does not support me in my work	5	0.3
The working hours expected of me here are too long	4	0.2
The quality of training available to me here is poor	2	0.1
My workplace is understaffed	1	0.1
Total	**1,611**	**100.0**

Note. 102 doctors did not answer this question.

A second optional question allowed all doctors who voluntarily withdrew to provide additional qualitative detail in an open text box and over half provided some detail here (*n* = 925, 54.0%). Table 5 shows the breakdown of doctors completing this additional information by Division.

Table 5. Percentage of Doctors on Each Division Providing Qualitative Feedback

Division	N	% of Division
General	723	54.5
Specialist	176	51.6
Intern / Supervised / Trainee Specialist	26	56.5
Total	**925**	

This qualitative information, grouped by Division, was subjected to thematic analysis and results are presented in the following section.

Doctors with General Registration who Voluntarily Withdrew

As seen in Table 5, a considerable amount of feedback came from doctors leaving the General Division. Four themes were generated from the analysis of these comments:

- Theme 1 - Unable to secure employment
- Theme 2 - Financial reasons
- Theme 3 - Working or training abroad
- Theme 4 – Personal and family reasons

Theme 1 – Unable to secure employment

This theme captures a very prominent reason why many of the doctors registered on the General Division voluntarily withdrew: they were not able to secure employment. Doctors spoke of not being offered any positions, even after submitting multiple applications, sometimes over long periods of time, stretching from months to more than a year. There was a sense of disappointment and frustration after actively seeking a job and sometimes not being called for a single interview.

"I have decided to voluntarily withdraw from the register as I have been unable to secure a suitable position despite actively searching for the past six months."

"I have been applying to multiple jobs consistently for the past year but was not able to secure a single interview, let alone securing a job. Extremely disappointed"

"I belong to a humble background and unfortunately i didn't secure a job . I don't have enough resources to renew my registration at the moment ."

Some of the reasons offered in the comments were that Ireland now has a highly competitive and saturated job market. Some comments also referenced needing more experience with previous HSE experience described as desirable and required in some instances. Other doctors did not fully understand why they were not gaining offers despite their clinical experience in different countries and wanted more feedback from unsuccessful applications.

"Unfortunately, many positions within the HSE were unwilling to hire an SHO without HSE experience. In fact, many of my applications were rejected automatically based on the "HSE experience Yes/No" question. I was told I could complete a clinical attachment so as to render myself employable, but I could not afford to live and work in Ireland without an income for the

duration of the attachment, and then later on pay for the license renewal. I am very sorry."

"I think there are less job opportunities and more saturation in job market so it's very difficult to pay every year for registration without a job in Ireland. Thank you."

"I have been waiting for so long for job I improved my CV but still I was not selected for job. There was no feedback from hospital where I was lacking. Kindly make a feedback system for candidates."

It was also clear from the comments that many of these doctors were trying to find a job in Ireland while being based abroad. Many of the comments specifically referenced Pakistan and some stated that they would restore in the future if they did find employment.

"I am practicing medicine in Pakistan currently. I have applied for many jobs in Ireland despite clinical experience of more than 10 years, found no luck. And there is no discount on Annual retention fee for low income countries that is provided by GMC though. So I am withdrawing from register."

"I waited for registration for long time when I got it I applied in various jobs in Ireland but I was unable to get a single job. I don't know what is your job seeking criteria even though I am an experienced doctor here in Pakistan"

"I am a IMG from Pakistan who has been unable to secure job in Ireland regardless of registration, I cannot afford high fees."

"As I am based in Pakistan, I was applying for jobs for more than 1 year but due to non availability of jobs, I have to want to agree with your the application and will resume once I get the job in the Ireland"

Theme 2 - Financial reasons

This theme refers to the fact that many of the doctors withdrawing the Register simply could not afford the retention fees. This fact was sometimes linked to the previous theme, as not being able to secure a job affected their finances. In their comments, many doctors complained about fees being too high, and some wished that similar arrangements to those in the General Medical Council in the UK were put in place regarding fees for doctors who practise abroad.

Doctors expressed their intention to continue paying fees to maintain their name on their Register, however, some report being unable to do so. It is important to note that many doctors working abroad in developing countries explained that the cost of the fees are far too expensive when considering their salaries in their local currency.

"Due to ongoing financial constraints and lack of success in securing employment in Ireland over the past year, I am unable to afford the annual retention fee at this time. I am therefore voluntarily withdrawing my registration, with the intention to reapply once my circumstances improve."

"I am making this decision because I do not have enough money to pay for my registration for now. I'll restore it in the future."

"I am not able to secure a job in Ireland. I live in a third world country. My income is far less than this payment. I cannot afford this fee."

"I can't pay 2 registration fees in 2 regulatory bodies while i am in training. IMC doesn't have instalment plan to pay the annual fees. There is no option to pay reduced price to register without licence to practice in Ireland like GMC if I have plans to return to Ireland in the future."

"I am currently working in Pakistan with a monthly income of approximately 100,000 PKR (around €300), which makes it extremely difficult to afford the annual retention fee of approximately €600."

"Keeping my registration active requires a considerable amount of fees, of which I am uncomfortable to spend while I'm working in Saudi Arabia"

Theme 3 - Working or training abroad

This theme was one of the reasons doctors were leaving the Register, as many stated they were working abroad (e.g. in the UK, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom, South Africa, Australia). Some doctors were returning to their home countries, or going abroad to work for a limited period of time. Likewise, the same was true for doctors who were moving (or were already based) abroad due to fellowships or other types of training. Yet others mentioned they were abroad, but did not specify the reason.

"I am working full-time in the United Kingdom and hope to work in the Republic of Ireland in the future but am not sure of the timeline."

"I am working in South Africa now and don't intend on working abroad again."

"I am moving to Canada to take up a specialty training role. This does not require me to be registered with the Irish Medical Council. I may return to Ireland in the future and may request to re-instate my registration should I return."

"I am planning to complete my specialist training in Germany and then restore my registration in the specialist division in the IMC once I complete my specialist registration in Germany."

"I started higher specialist training in the UK in February 2024 and do not plan to practice medicine in Ireland until the completion of my specialist training in the UK"

"I am currently in a training position in my own country, Pakistan. I intend to complete my training and then apply for registration again. Meanwhile, I won't be able to pay annual registration retention fees till then."

"I have relocated to Australia for 2-3 years to gain experience. I plan to return to Ireland in a couple of years at which point I will re-register for the Irish Medical Council."

Theme 4 – Personal and family reasons

This last theme groups together several different reasons, although the main reasons were personal and family circumstances. These included caring for family members, taking a break from work due to maternity leave, personal or family member's health issues, or age-related reasons. Some comments also expressed lack of career progression and opportunities as the cause of withdrawing from the Register.

"Due to family reasons I won't be able to practice Medicine in Ireland for the time being"

"I want to take a break to give time to my family. I will start practicing medicine again in a year or so."

"I am not currently working in Ireland and am working in Pakistan. due to some personal issue I am unable to travel to Ireland in the next year so that's why I am requesting voluntary withdrawal"

"I am currently taking care of my mother, which is a full-time responsibility"

"I will eventually return, however, opportunity for career progression in Ireland as a non-EU citizen is limited. I will seek to further my career elsewhere in the meantime"

"Because of my age! I remained on the Register and completed CPD etc because I am so interested and remained available during Covid. Being on the Register gave me a sense of collegiality."

"As there are no training opportunities for the IMG's in Ireland, that's the reason I moved to UK"

Doctors with Specialist Registration who Voluntarily Withdrew

From the comments coming from doctors in the Specialist Division leaving the Register three main themes were generated and a fourth which covered more miscellaneous reasons is also explored:

- Theme 1 – Retiring from medical practice
- Theme 2 – Working abroad
- Theme 3 – Personal reasons
- Theme 4 – Miscellaneous

Theme 1 – Retiring from medical practice

Many of the doctors on the Specialist Division were leaving the Register as they were retiring, or were already retired but had not yet left the Register. Many cited their age and retired with a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction.

"I am retired from HSE. I no longer wish to practice"

"it's time to hand on the baton to the next generation"

"While still teaching and training and supervising NCHDs I am no longer seeing patients and so have decided to finally call it a day after the privilege of working as a clinician and being registered by the medical council since 1978. thank you."

Other doctors would have preferred to stay in some intermittent fashion but as felt this was not an option without full time active practise.

"I have been fully retired from practicing Medicine for 10 yrs. I have retained my name on Medical Register, only, since retiring. Fulfilling CPD requirements are too onerous at this stage of my life."

"i am retiring from general practice. i feel the current regulations make it impossible to remain registered unless you are in active practice - I feel this is a mistake as the experience of huge numbers of older doctors is being lost."

"Although I am retiring from active practice there does not seem to a mechanism that would allow me to continue practice in an intermittent way without enrolling in a very expensive medical defence output. Also the mechanism of re-registration is ridiculously complicated and cumbersome."

Theme 2 – Working abroad

Some of the doctors on the Specialist Division stated they were working abroad solely, and that they did not need to be registered with the Medical Council anymore. Some were moving abroad for work and training opportunities, others were moving back to their home country often citing personal and family reasons and some had never worked in Ireland or had not worked in Ireland for a considerable period of time.

"Working in Australia"

"Currently, I am practising in Spain and don't see the possibility to move to Ireland shortly"

"I do not intend to return to Ireland to practice. I have been practicing in Canada since 2010"

"I have moved to a permanent post in the UK"

"Working as a permanent Consultant in Northern Ireland."

"I am currently practicing medicine in Sweden. I will reactivate my registration when i intend to move to Ireland"

"Going on a 2 year fellowship to Australia and New Zealand"

"I am only temporarily withdrawing to take up a training post abroad and plan to rejoin in 2-3 years on my return"

Theme 3 – Personal reasons

Personal reasons also featured among the reasons for doctors leaving the Register from the Specialist Division. Some of these reasons were related to health issues, maternity leave, family circumstances and some cited burnout and exhaustion.

"I have had 2 recent episodes of ill health and have not fully recovered."

"Plans for my career have changed"

"I am going on maternity leave and am not likely to return to work until mid-next year"

"Due to family reasons now currently living in India and wish to withdraw registration"

"Burnout"

"Exhaustion. Need a break"

Theme 4 – Miscellaneous

This theme encompasses different issues raised by this group of doctors. The main issue related to concerns that caused frustration with the Irish Health System. These related to inefficiencies in the system, outdated processes, staff shortages, lack of opportunities, and being treated unfairly.

"Although I recognize that there are aspects in the Irish health system that work better, the fact that there is no digital process and not knowing what is happening with the patient in the several hospitals, has led me to a feeling of insecurity in relation to the treatment of patients, which is still undervalued by my colleagues."

"I'd like to request the withdrawal of my registration due to professional and systemic concerns. I have found the primary care system to be outdated, with poor communication channels, reliance on paper-based documentation and paternalistic approach to patient care."

"I am from Australia, and I am moving back there. mainly because my family is there and this was always planned as a part time move. However the Irish health system is broken and frustrating to work in despite great health care workers and lovely patients."

"A lot of Irish medicine is understaffed and there are issues with respect of more junior staff."

"I took retirement after having been bullied repeatedly by the hospital manager."

Other doctors cited that they were unable to pay the fees, while not practising in Ireland and that a lesser fee to maintain their place without practising would be helpful.

"I have been registered with the council but i was unable to find a job"

"I am seeking job in Ireland, and I can not afford to pay the fee of 560E without being employed in a medical post in Ireland. There should be a discounted fee for this, coming to full payment when a doctor gets a job."

"It's expensive to maintain my registration in Ireland when I currently practising anaesthesia and intensive care in the UK"

"I am not going to do locums anymore (as far as I can tell now) and not wishing to pay just to stay on the register."

Doctors with Internship, Trainee Specialist or Supervised Registration who Voluntarily Withdrew

This last cohort represented a small minority from the doctors who voluntarily withdrew from other Divisions and left detailed comments on their reasons to do so. There was no clear theme, as there were only few comments, but most of them referred to either moving abroad to do a fellowship, moving back to their home countries after finishing a fellowship in Ireland, or moving to Australia to work.

"Going abroad for fellowship for 2 years, too expensive to remain on the register here while over there"

"I have completed my fellowship training."

"I will be working in Australia for 1-2 years"

Conclusion

In 2025, 2501 doctors left the Medical Council's Medical Register. The majority of these doctors voluntarily withdrew their registration during the calendar year (*n* = 1,713, 68.5%), while the remaining cohort (*n* = 788, 31.5%) were removed for not fulfilling their registration requirements during the annual retention period. The majority of both cohorts were aged 34 and younger, male, on the General Division of the Register and held an international basic medical qualification from outside of Ireland, the EU or the UK.

Doctors voluntarily withdrawing described a number of challenges that influenced their decision and a very strong theme among international medical graduates on the General Division was difficulty securing employment and financial constraints around maintaining registration as a result of this. Doctors felt that the job market was saturated, highly competitive and that they needed more experience to work in the Irish health system. There was also a sense that they got limited feedback from job applications. Many of these doctors expressed a desire to restore their registration after securing employment. Interestingly, recent research commissioned by the General Medical Council in the UK described similar barriers for international medical graduates trying to gain employment in the United Kingdom[2].

Working or training abroad were themes among doctors on both the General Division and the Specialist Division. Some doctors described working or training abroad to gain experience with an intention to return, others were practising in their home country and others had moved abroad due to better opportunities and work-life balance.

Personal and family reasons also featured for doctors on both the General and Specialist Division. This often centered around caring responsibilities and other forms of leave. Doctors on the Specialist Division also often mentioned retirement or age-related factors and were more likely to cite issues around the Irish health system and their own health, both in terms of their physical health and their mental health.

[2] experiences-of-international-doctors-who-join-the-uk-medical-register-and-do-not-practise--114665096.pdf

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