

COUNTRY REPORT

MALTA

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Introduction

Malta has an ageing population, which might ask for a greater workforce in the care sector in the future. The ethos persisting among the Maltese people is for elderly to stay active and at home as long as possible. Domiciliary long-term care (LTC) at home is usually preferred over LTC in residential facilities by the people as well as by the state. The current main political instruments in the Personal and Household Services (PHS) sector aiming at the goal of domiciliary care are Home Help, CommCare, the Carer at Home Scheme, the Carer's Allowance (or Pension), and the Work at Place Scheme/ Jobsplus training and education programme for the care for children, people with disabilities and elderly people. In the future, the PHS sector in Malta could open up job opportunities for migrants and elderly working women with lower qualifications. Furthermore, local initiatives have tried to create incentives for elderly people to stay more active in their community and to be able to live at home as long as possible.



Factors Supporting the Growth and Development of the Field of PHS

In general, **Malta's population is aging** like in most European Union (EU) countries, and this is expected to worsen in the coming years. The country has a total fertility rate of 1.53 children per woman, below the replacement rate of 2.1. **Nevertheless, Malta experienced the fastest expansion of all EU member states** with an increase of 36.8 per 1,000 persons (with the EU average being at 2.1 per 1,000 persons) in 2018, **largely due to migration**. Specifically, the immense population increase in Malta in 2018 was driven by a net migration of 17,102 persons, an increase of 17 per cent when compared to the previous year. Excluding adoptions, the largest share of migrants in 2018 were third-country nationals at 9,209 persons followed by other EU nationals at 7,349 persons; net migration of Maltese nationals was estimated at 480 persons.¹

Malta faces an enormous challenge on the labour market in the form of undeclared work. Maltese legislation does not define undeclared work; however, the estimated scale of undeclared work in 2012 amounted to more than a quarter of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). **Migrants**, particularly those from sub-Saharan Africa residing in open centres, are prone to **engage in exploitative undeclared employment**. Seasonal or part-time employment also attracts a significant number of students in undeclared work, and a proportion of formally inactive women also does undeclared work. The main sectors which appear to attract undeclared work are tourism (including hotels and restaurants), sales, construction, and services such as private tuition and health care.²

¹ Malta Independent Online (2019); Statistics Explained (2019); World Population Review (2019).

² European Commission (n/a).

With regard to female labour market participation, the share is lower than the EU average. This is mainly due to an old policy according to which married women had to give up paid employment. Therefore, a large part of elderly women does not participate in the formal labour market. Younger women, whose education levels are usually higher than those of their male peers, participate significantly more in the labour market. However, the participation rate of women declines when they take over care responsibilities for young children or elderly family members. According to the National Statistics Office (NSO) Malta, the share of women working on a full-time basis was 75 per cent in 2017, indicating an increase of 1.1 percentage points when compared to 2012 levels (while on average, the share of full-time employed males was 92 per cent between 2012 and 2017).³

In general, **Malta's workforce remains relatively low-qualified, with employment rates being above the EU average at all qualification levels.** Despite significant improvements in recent years, Malta has the highest proportion of low-qualified adults in the EU: 53 per cent of those aged between 25 and 64 have at most an education level equivalent to lower secondary education (ISCED 0-2). In addition, the proportion of low-qualified young people (aged 20 to 24) in Malta is among the highest in the EU (23 and 17 per cent, respectively), while the tertiary educational attainment rate is one of the lowest.⁴

With employment rates among low-qualified Maltese people being high, **employment in the care sector is effectively opening up opportunities for non-Maltese workers.** This effect is increased by the fact that young Maltese women have sought more lucrative jobs and followed more attractive career routes recently and therefore do not represent a prime target group for this sector anymore. Most of the new posts created in this sector are filled in by non-Maltese workers and in the case of home-based carers mostly by Filipinos. Migrant workers in general, whose current working conditions are described as resulting in forced labour, as well as older Maltese-born women with limited work experience outside their homes could represent future target groups for jobs requiring lower qualification levels, for example in the care sector.⁵



Definition and Development of PHS Instruments

There is **no national definition of PHS** in Malta, but so-called “**domestic services**” are regulated by the Domestic Service Wages Council Wage Regulation Order⁶. It applies to persons employed in private households or engaged in domestic duties such as “servants”, maids, housekeepers, cooks, butlers, valets, handymen, cleaners, charwomen, washerwomen, babysitters, nursemaids, chauffeurs, gardeners, and similar occupations connected with the household. The term „**private household**” also includes charitable institutions which provide residential care, monasteries, and convents. In terms of the order,

³ Malta Chamber of Commerce (2018); NSO Malta (2018).

⁴ Caruana (2019); European Commission (2018a); Vassallo (2018).

⁵ Caruana (2019); European Commission (2018a); Vassallo (2018).

⁶ Government of Malta (1976).

so-called “domestic servants” are categorized into six groups with particular conditions applying to them.⁷

The most popular Maltese government support programme in the PHS sector started as the **Home Help System**, through which an elderly person or an elderly couple used to have a carer assigned to them at a small charge and for a number of hours agreed between the carer and the elderly person. When the programme was introduced, the carer’s responsibility was primarily to ensure that the general needs of the person were catered for. The service has now developed into CommCare and Home Help is now restricted to “maid” services. In December 2017, the new Home Help (“maid”) service was provided to 3,668 beneficiaries, spread all over Malta and Gozo.⁸

Nowadays, **CommCare** is primarily provided through personal care workers and managed by a team of nurses supported by a multi-disciplinary team, who are jointly responsible for developing a care plan for each elderly person. Most CommCare services are outsourced to the private sector. Domiciliary nursing and care are the backbone of CommCare, which acts as a gatekeeper for domiciliary care nursing services provided by service providers; it has a regulatory function as authorised by the Active Ageing and Community Care (AACC) Directorate⁹. In 2017, there were 9,584 clients receiving nursing/caring services through and 801,250 nursing/caring interventions by CommCare.¹⁰

A very important subprogramme of CommCare offered both in Malta and Gozo is the **Carer at Home Scheme**. It is a governmental programme which allows more elderly people to stay in their community. The programme financially assists families in employing a carer to look after an elderly family member who is on the waiting list for long-term residential care. The support aims at older persons who employ a care worker of their choice so as to assist them in their daily needs. The initiative also saves money for the state since it is cheaper than residential care. The system is run on an individual basis and generally staffed by Filipino women.¹¹

Furthermore, there is the **Carer’s Allowance (or Pension)**, which is available for persons who cannot take up active employment because they need to look after an ailing member of their family. The access and uptake of this scheme were very limited first, but due to a widening of the target group, the number of beneficiaries increased from 81 to 498 persons between February 2017 and January 2018, respectively.¹²

Another government programme is the **Work Placement Scheme**, forming a part of the Training for Employment project co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) from 2014 to 2020. It gives Jobsplus¹³ trainees the opportunity to acquire both theoretical and practical training, namely the “Vocational Education and Training Award in Child Care (0-3 years)”, the “Vocational Education and Training Award for Care Workers for Persons with [a] Disability”, and the “Vocational Education and Training Award for Care Workers for the Elderly”.

⁷ Government of Malta (2020b).

⁸ Jobsplus (2017); Vassallo (2018).

⁹ <https://activeageing.gov.mt/onlineforms/Pages/AACCD-EN.aspx>.

¹⁰ Jobsplus (2017); Vassallo (2018).

¹¹ Jobsplus (2017); Vassallo (2018).

¹² Jobsplus (2017); Vassallo (2018).

¹³ <https://jobsplus.gov.mt/>; Jobsplus is a public service and website offering a meeting platform for employers and employees as well as training courses for the latter.

Participants are paid a training allowance payable by Jobsplus for every hour attended, which is calculated on basis of the national minimum wage.¹⁴



Landscape of Users

In 2010, **the private hiring of a Filipino domestic worker** (Filipinos representing the biggest group among migrants working as domestic workers) as a nanny for the children or as a carer for elderly family members still **seemed to be the prerogative of a few well-off families**. Most Filipino personal carers are entrusted with that care in the private homes of the elderly themselves.¹⁵



Financing of the Main Instruments and Associated Prices

Through the **Carer at Home Scheme**, the **Maltese government** financially supports those senior citizens who employ a carer of their choice so as to assist them in their daily needs. The beneficiary will receive up to a maximum of EUR 5,200 per year starting when the application is approved. The benefit is paid on a monthly basis directly into a bank account indicated by the applicant (after prior assessment by a CommCare professional), provided that they are over 60 years of age and employ a carer with a recognised qualification by means of a regular employment contract.¹⁶

As mentioned above, the **Work Placement Scheme** and therefore also the public platform, service and website **Jobsplus**, which are part of the Training for Employment project, are co-financed by the **Maltese government** and the **ESF** from 2014 to 2020. Jobsplus pays a training allowance calculated on basis of the national minimum wage for every hour attended by trainees taking part in theoretical and practical training courses with a focus on care for people with disabilities, elderly people, and children as offered by the website.¹⁷

¹⁴ Jobsplus (2017).

¹⁵ Debono (2010).

¹⁶ AACC Directorate (2019); Jobsplus (2017).

¹⁷ AACC Directorate (2019); Jobsplus (2017).



Work Arrangements

For elderly Maltese people, it has been customary to continue to live at home in the community which they knew, an ethos that persists to this very day. With social change and expanded education, the availability of Maltese people able and willing to take on care duties for elderly relatives is declining. Nevertheless, many Maltese elderly people continued to be looked after by family members and without any direct financial support still in 2018; however, the exact extent of this is impossible to gauge as no documentation or ad hoc research exists. Accordingly, **Malta is one of the EU member states in which it is mostly private households who directly hire the domestic workers they need.**¹⁸



Landscape of Intermediaries and Quality Management

People applying for a job as a carer within the Carer at Home Scheme must have a recognised qualification. For this purpose, a document by the Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre (**MQRIC**)¹⁹, which is part of the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (**NCFHE**)²⁰, is required for each qualification obtained abroad and whenever deemed necessary by the government department responsible, namely the **AACC Directorate**, which retains the right of refusal of any qualification.²¹

In the case of Filipino domestic workers, who represented the biggest group among migrants working as domestic workers in 2010, **agencies from the Philippines** typically have a supporting role in the process. They legally bring the employees-to-be to Malta, where they also have local representatives. Still, they do not seem to function as typical intermediaries, as most Filipino domestic workers are directly hired by private households.²²

¹⁸ Debono (2010); Mather (2015); Vassallo (2018).

¹⁹ <https://ncfhe.gov.mt/en/services/Pages/All%20Services/mqric.aspx>; As part of the NCFHE, the MQRIC provides recognition and comparability of both academic and vocational qualifications.

²⁰ <https://ncfhe.gov.mt/en/Pages/default.aspx>.

²¹ AACC Directorate (2019); Jobsplus (2017).

²² Debono (2010); Vassallo (2018).



Landscape of Employees and Degree of Professionalisation

Statistics by the former Employment Training Corporation (ETC) (nowadays: Jobsplus) show that **Maltese people still account for 71 per cent of all home-based personal care workers**. 108 of 499 (22 per cent) registered home-based personal care workers come from the Philippines as well as 10 of 23 registered nannies working in Malta. **Filipino workers constitute the majority of the 278 foreigners working in private households**, as 140 Filipinos are registered as personal care workers, nannies, domestic cleaners, butlers, and housekeepers. The Carer at Home System for example is mostly based on the work by women from the Philippines.²³

As mentioned above, **Jobsplus** trainees are provided through the Work Placement Scheme by the government with the opportunity to acquire both **theoretical and practical training in childcare, as care workers for persons with disabilities, and as care workers for the elderly**. The duration of the programme for a trainee is a maximum of 26 weeks with an average of 30 hours of training/work per week. The on-the-job training takes place at the employer's premises with whom the trainee is placed. The hours trainees have to perform is set by Jobsplus, although trainees are allowed a degree of attendance flexibility ranging approximately between 20 to 40 hours per week. The classroom training programmes are recognized by the NCFHE and pegged at respective levels of the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF)²⁴, whereas the course exams are held by Jobsplus.²⁵

People doing undeclared work in LTC have few opportunities to improve their skills or to have their skills and experience formally recognised in order to assist them in becoming LTC professionals. In 2017, a course including theory and practice in the care of the elderly was offered by the University of Malta²⁶ and the St. Vincent de Paul Long Term Care Facility²⁷. The University of Malta accredited this course as a unit within its Programme in the Liberal Arts and Sciences (PLAS), which belongs to the Centre of Liberal Arts and Sciences²⁸. It is unknown how many people attended and if the course will be repeated. Paid courses are also offered by CareMalta²⁹, which has a training academy.³⁰

²³ Debono (2010); Vassallo (2018).

²⁴ <https://ncfhe.gov.mt/en/Pages/MQF.aspx>; The MQF is "a referencing tool that helps to describe and compare both national and foreign qualifications to promote quality, transparency, and mobility of qualifications in all types of education."

²⁵ Jobsplus (2017).

²⁶ <https://www.um.edu.mt/>.

²⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/svpmalta/>.

²⁸ <https://www.um.edu.mt/clas>.

²⁹ <https://www.caremalta.com/who-we-are/>; "CareMalta Group is Malta's market leaders in providing quality services in nursing and residential care, independent living for older persons, specialised dementia care and certified courses in health and older persons care."

³⁰ AACC Directorate (2019); Jobsplus (2017).



Wages

In legal terms of the Domestic Service Wages Council Wage Regulation Order³¹, so-called **“domestic servants” are categorized into six groups** and “whole timers” (Group 1 to 4) and “part timers” (Group 5 and 6) as follows:³²

Group 1: workers engaged by the month who sleep in their employer’s house on not less than seventeen nights in any month, paid EUR 784.11 per month; **Group 2:** workers engaged by the month who sleep in their employer’s house on less than seventeen nights a month or not at all, paid EUR 779.45 per month; **Group 3:** workers engaged by the week who sleep in their employer’s house on not less than four nights in any week, paid EUR 181.08 per week; **Group 4:** workers engaged by the week who sleep in their employer’s house on less than four nights a week or not at all, paid EUR 179.33 per week; **Group 5:** workers who are engaged by the day, paid EUR 29.89 per day; and **Group 6:** workers who are engaged by the hour, paid EUR 4.48 per hour.³³

In 2019, **unofficial salary estimates** based on salary survey data collected directly from employers and anonymous employees in Malta show the following: An entry level “domestic helper” (with one to three years of experience) earns an average salary of EUR 9,151 per year. At the other end, a senior level “domestic helper” (with eight years and more of experience) earns an average salary of EUR 11,118 per year. The average “domestic helper” salary in Malta is EUR 9,676 per year or an equivalent hourly rate of EUR 5; in addition, an average bonus of EUR 94 per year is paid.³⁴ One typical employee group in the PHS sector, namely **Filipinos working as carers for the elderly, are said to be paid national minimum wage usually,**³⁵ which was at EUR 179.33 per week with 40 hours of work as of April 2020.³⁶



Social Dialogue in the Field of PHS

No traditional social partners on either the employees’ or employers’ side **seem to exist in Malta**. At least within the Carer at Home System, some form of workers organisation exists: As the system is run on an individual basis and generally staffed by women who come from the Philippines to undertake this work, these carers have organised themselves in informal networks over time.³⁷

³¹ Government of Malta (1976).

³² Government of Malta (2020b).

³³ Government of Malta (2020b).

³⁴ SalaryExpert (2019).

³⁵ Debono (2010).

³⁶ WageIndicator (2019).

³⁷ Vassallo (2018).



Policy Process

The **AACC Directorate** is the government department that is **responsible for all “elderly services”**, including **care in private homes** and therefore programmes such as **Home Help, CommCare**, and the **Carer at Home Scheme**.³⁸

The **Department of Social Security**³⁹ oversees the **Carer’s Allowance** (or Pension). Its Multi-Disciplinary Board decides with each application if a case falls within the medical parameters for payment of the allowance following an assessment based on the Barthel Index or the Mini-Mental State Examination.⁴⁰



Commonalities across Countries

As mentioned above, **the ideal for elderly Maltese people** has traditionally been to continue **to live at home** in the community which they knew and to be cared for by their relatives. This is a feature that **can be found in other South European countries**, too.⁴¹



Previous Instruments

N/A



Promising Practices

Over the years, some **local councils have introduced initiatives** such as coffee mornings, special educational sessions, outings, and keep-fit classes in order **to keep the elderly active** and well looked-after **in the community**.⁴² Nevertheless, this should be treated with caution as such an approach might also be due to a political ethos that asks the individual to take more responsibility for themselves in order to relieve the state from some of its duties. On

³⁸ Government of Malta (2016; 2020a; 2020c).

³⁹ <https://socialsecurity.gov.mt/en/Pages/default.aspx>.

⁴⁰ Government of Malta (2016; 2020a; 2020c).

⁴¹ Vassallo (2018).

⁴² Vassallo (2018).

the positive side, **domiciliary LTC services have multiplied and been improved** considerably in recent years.⁴³

⁴³ Vassallo (2018).

Glossary

Formalisation: In the context of informal care work, the European Commission describes how “formalisation of informal care takes place either through payments and associated social security (pension and health insurance), training/ certification of skills schemes and finally legislation (recognition of status and rights to being assessed as a carer)”. In the same article, the EC associates “any type of formal work” with the following features: payments (preferably regular and predictable); an employment contract and social security (such as being protected by regulation); training and validation of skills; and finally broader legislation which recognises the importance of the role and offers assurance of a certain minimum standard of rights”.⁴⁴

Immigration: “Immigration” is the action by which a person establishes their usual residence in the territory of a Member State for a period that is, or is expected to be, of at least 12 months, having previously been usually resident in another Member State or a third country (Regulation (EC) No 862/2007 on Migration and international protection).⁴⁵

Migration Chain: The terms “chain migration” or “migration chain” refer to “a process in which initial movements of migrants lead to further movements from the same area to the same area. In a chain migration system, individual members of a community migrate and then encourage or assist further movements of migration”.⁴⁶

Professionalisation: “[P]rofessionalisation means granting workers of a certain sector employment and social protection rights that are equivalent to those enjoyed by employees working under employment contracts regulated by law, including a decent wage, regulated working hours, paid leave, health and safety at work, pensions, maternity/paternity and sick leaves, compensation in the event of invalidity, rules governing dismissal or termination of the contract, redress in the event of abuse, and access to training; whereas the domestic work and care sector can be professionalised through a combination of public finance (tax breaks), social finance (family allowances, aid to businesses, mutual societies and health insurance, works councils, etc.) and private finance (payment for services by private individuals)”.⁴⁷

Regularisation: In the context of (illegal) migration, “regularisation” is defined by the European Union (EU) “as state procedure by which illegally staying third-country nationals are awarded a legal status”; a synonym that is rather used in the USA and less in the EU is “legalisation” (AE: “legalization”).⁴⁸

⁴⁴ European Parliament (2008).

⁴⁵ Eurostat (2018).

⁴⁶ European Commission (2018c).

⁴⁷ European Council, European Parliament (2016: 6).

⁴⁸ European Commission (2009).

Regular Profession: In the context of work and professions, the EU defines a “profession” as “regulated (...) if [one has] to hold a specific degree to access the profession, sit special exams such as state exams and/or register with a professional body before [one] can practice it”.⁴⁹

Undeclared Work: In the EU, the term “undeclared work” denotes “[a]ny paid activities that are lawful as regards their nature but not declared to public authorities, taking account of differences in the regulatory systems of the Member States.” The Member States have adopted a variety of different definitions focusing upon non-compliance with either labour, tax and/or social security legislation or regulations: If there are additional forms of non-compliance, it is not undeclared work. If the goods and services provided are unlawful (for example, the production/trafficking of drugs, firearms and persons, or money laundering), it is part of the wider criminal economy, such as the “shadow economy” (often defined as including both the undeclared economy and the criminal economy), and if there is no monetary payment, it is part of the unpaid sphere.⁵⁰

Undocumented or Irregular Migrant: The EU defines a “undocumented” or “irregular migrant” as “a third-country national present on the territory of a Schengen State who does not fulfil, or no longer fulfils, the conditions of entry as set out in the Regulation (EU) 2016/399 (Schengen Borders Code) or other conditions for entry, stay or residence in that EU Member State”.⁵¹

Unpaid Sphere: The term “unpaid sphere” refers to activities that are lawful as regards their nature but not declared to public authorities and without monetary payment.⁵²

⁴⁹ EU (2019).

⁵⁰ European Commission (2018b).

⁵¹ European Commission (2018c).

⁵² European Commission (2018b).

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