



5th May 2021

Deputy Thomas Gould,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 19253/21 - To ask the Minister for Health the number of babies given developmental checks by age in months in 2020 and to date in 2021.

–Thomas Gould

Dear Deputy Gould,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (PQ 19253/21), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

The number of developmental checks in 2020 and in January to March 2021 is shown in the table below.

Developmental Check	Full Year 2020	January to March 2021
The number of new born babies visited by a Public Health Nurse within 48 hours (i.e. $0 \leq 48$ hours) of discharge from maternity services	33,752	6,665
Number of babies SEEN at the PHN First Visit	36,839	600
Number of babies SEEN at the PHN 3 month assessment	25,905	309
Number of those children reaching 10 months within the reporting period who have had their Child Development Health Screening on time or before reaching 12 months of age *	28,184	N/A
Number of those children reaching 12 months within the reporting period who have had their Child Development Health Screening on time or before reaching 12 months of age *	N/A	3,643

*** The minimum age at which children had their Child Development Health Screening on time or before reaching 12 months of age was at 10 months of age in 2020 and at 12 months of age in 2021.**

Note that all non-essential clinical work was suspended in mid-March 2020 including all routine child developmental checks. Since March 2020, many PHN staff have been redeployed to support COVID-19 related clinical activities up to and including leading on the newly established COVID-19 central vaccination clinics. This redeployment of staff has had a significant impact on the capacity of the PHN service to deliver the core child health screening and surveillance programme.

The HSE have developed a formal programme of work under the governance of the Chief Clinical Officer and Chief Operations Officer namely the Continuity of System Wide Healthcare Services Steering Group. The focus is to plan the recommencement of the delivery of non-COVID Services to address ongoing clinical demands while maintaining capacity for COVID-19 rapid response.

The child immunisation programmes was prioritised in the recommencement of services and this work has been progressed in recent weeks. A date for the resumption of developmental checks has not been set but the preparatory work in terms of infrastructure readiness to ensure a clean and safe environment is underway. This programme of work is a priority for the Health Service Executive and every effort will be made to restore this in the context of “A safe return to health services – restoring services in a COVID Environment” and public health guidance as it evolves through implementation of the Governments “Resilience and Recovery 2020 – 2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19”.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,



Maeve Raeside

General Manager Primary Care
National Community Operations