



6<sup>th</sup> May 2021

Deputy Sean Sherlock,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

**PQ 20769/21 - To ask the Minister for Health the number of public health nurse visits that have been missed in 2020 and to date in 2021 with new mothers by CHO area broken into specific areas under CHO area in tabular form.**

– Sean Sherlock

Dear Deputy Sherlock,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (PQ 20769/21), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

I refer to your above question and wish to advise the information sought is not routinely collected, however the following data is available which I hope will be of assistance to you regarding the number of visits made by Public Health Nursing staff. I have also included the numbers for the full year of 2019 of visits made pre Covid 19 pandemic.

The number of developmental checks in 2019, 2020 and in January to March 2021 is shown in the table below.

Developmental Check	Full Year 2019	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 ≤ 48 hours) of discharge from maternity services	44,562	33,752	6,665
Number of babies SEEN at the PHN First Visit	43,618	36,839	600
Number of babies SEEN at the PHN 3 month assessment	42,009	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 *	53,524	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	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 Public Health Nursing (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