



6th October 2021

Deputy Catherine Murphy,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 45112/21 - To ask the Minister for Health the date on which public health nurses will resume in-person checks; and the number of days public health nurses have been not in regular active service since March 2020 to date.

- Catherine Murphy

Dear Deputy Murphy,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (PQ 45112/21), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

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 establishment of 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.

However, due to the recruitment of vaccinators and more staff to test and trace, our public health nursing staff are returning to their core duties and child development checks will be a priority as a result. Building upon the experience from earlier waves of the pandemic, Community Services has developed a prioritisation framework to support local decisions to be made on service prioritisation. This approach will ensure that services will be focused on identifying and supporting patients who have the greatest need and enabling staff to be deployed where necessary to support these patients. It is the intention of Community Services that full services would return as soon as is safe and practicable.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

Seán McArt
General Manager Primary Care
National Community Operations