



Oifig Ceannasaí Oibríochtaí,
Oibríochtaí Pobail, Cúram Priomhúil

Seomra 243, Ospidéal Dr Steevens,
Lána Steevens, Baile Átha Cliath 8.
D08 W2A8.

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4th August 2022

Deputy Denise Mitchell,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 40444/22 – To ask the Minister for Health the number of vacant public health nurse posts in Dublin at present; if he intends to fill these posts as a matter of urgency; if he will be making more resources available to allow public health nurses carry out the important role of childhood developmental checks for babies; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

- Denise Mitchell

Dear Deputy Mitchell,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (PQ 40444/22) which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Public Health Nurses are healthcare professionals who provide a range of nursing services. The Public Health Nursing service is one of a number of multidisciplinary health services provided through Primary Care within the community setting.

During the pandemic, many Public Health Nursing staff were redeployed to support Covid-19 related clinical activities, which in turn impacted the services available in certain areas. However, a framework was put in place to ensure that available staff were enabled to identify and support patients who have the greatest need in the community. In recent months, our public health nursing staff have returned to their core duties, which enables the resumption of a full service.

In some parts of the country, and particularly Dublin, this post-pandemic resumption is challenged by shortages in the Public Health Nursing Service – mainly due to loss of staff due to retirement, internal movement and challenges in replacing staff - which is having an impact on the capacity to deliver routine Public Health services. Where these shortfalls are arising, we continue to prioritise and support patients who have the greatest need in the community. These shortfalls will be reduced in the coming months with the appointment of student Public Health Nurses allocated to these areas. The HSE remain committed to child development checks provision across all CHO's.

The table below illustrates the PHN vacancies in Dublin by CHO area at the end of Q1 2022.

PHN vacancies at end of Q1 2022 in Dublin

CHO	Total
6	53
7	46
9	50
Total	149



I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Seán McArt'.

Seán McArt
General Manager Primary Care
National Community Operations