



Oifig Ceannasaí Oibríochtaí,  
Oibríochtaí Pobail, Cúram Príomhúil

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6<sup>th</sup> July 2022

Deputy Kathleen Funchion,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

PQ 32577/22 – To ask the Minister for Health:

1. the number of babies that received a full health screening and developmental checks in primary healthcare centres;
2. the number of babies that reached the age of 9 to 11 months without receiving a full health screening and developmental check in primary healthcare centres;
3. the number of babies that reached the age of 9 to 11 months that were not seen in this period for a full health screening and developmental checks in primary healthcare centres in 2020, 2021 and to date in 2022, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

– Kathleen Funchion

Dear Deputy Funchion,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (PQ 32577/22) which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

I refer to your above questions 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 child developmental health checks. I have also included the numbers for the full year of 2019 of developmental checks made pre Covid 19 pandemic.

The number of developmental checks in 2019, 2020, 2021 and in January to March 2022 is shown in the table below.

Developmental Check	Full Year 2019	Full Year 2020	Full Year 2021	January to March 2022
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	41,183	N/A (see note 1 below)
Number of babies SEEN at the PHN First Visit (in less than or equal to ≤ 72 hours of discharge from maternity services)	43,618	36,839	46,279	N/A
Number of babies SEEN at the PHN 3 month assessment	42,009	25,905	35,345	N/A



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	Metric not applicable in this year (see note 2 below)	Metric not applicable in this year (see note 2 below)
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 *	Metric not applicable in this year (see note 2 below)	Metric not applicable in this year (see note 2 below)	31,574	10,658

**Note 1: This data is not yet available. The March 2022 quarterly data was impacted by non-return of data likely due to staff covid absence. When the June 2022 quarterly data is returned it is expected that this will reflect the entirety of the activity for both quarter 1 and quarter 2.**

**Note 2: 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 prior years and at 12 months of age in 2021 and subsequent years.**

Since March 2020, many Public Health Nursing staff have been redeployed to support COVID-19 related clinical activities including providing clinical leadership and direct support in the establishment of COVID-19 vaccination clinics. This redeployment of staff has had a significant impact on the capacity of the Public Health Nursing service to deliver the core child health screening and surveillance programme. However, due to the recruitment of vaccinators and progress with the overall COVID 19 vaccination programme, our public health nursing staff are returning to their core duties which will enable the resumption of a full service.

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 has ensured that services are 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. Child development checks remain a priority and any parents with a concern should contact their GP or local Public Health Nursing service. Child development checks remain a priority for the HSE. This will continue to be monitored throughout 2022. HSE management will work in conjunction with the local areas to monitor the performance and address issues as they arise.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

**Maeve Raeside**  
General Manager Primary Care  
National Community Operatio