



Oifig Ceannasaí Oibríochtaí,
Oibríochtaí Pobail, Cúram Priomhúil

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

Office of the Head of Operations,
Community Operations - Primary Care

Rm 243, Dr Steevens Hospital,
Steevens Lane, Dublin 8. D08 W2A8.

www.hse.ie
[@hselive](https://twitter.com/hselive)

T: 01 6352209/2682
E: community.primarycare@hse.ie

25th May 2022

Deputy Duncan Smith,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 24926/22 – To ask the Minister for Health if the new lactation consultant posts promised for 2022 has been filled; if those recruited have commenced employment in that role; the total number of publicly funded lactation consultants currently working by CHO area; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

- Duncan Smith

Dear Deputy Smith,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (PQ 24926/22) which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

The HSE Breastfeeding in a Healthy Ireland Action Plan 2016-2023 is the framework for progressing supports for breastfeeding in Ireland. The HSE is partnering with key divisions to provide the supports that mothers require at all stages of the breastfeeding continuum.

34.5 new infant-feeding/lactation consultant posts in the HSE were approved in the last two years.

10.5 posts were approved through the National Maternity Strategy to ensure every maternity unit/hospital has at least one dedicated infant-feeding post in place. 8 of these posts are filled and recruitment continues for the remaining 2.5 posts.

There are currently 32.9 infant-feeding/lactation posts in place across maternity (24.6) and community services (8.3), which is an increase from 15.4 posts in place across the HSE in 2017. The HSE also recruited a national lead at the end of 2021 to support implementation of infant feeding standards within maternity services.

The Minister for Health announced funding for a further 24 additional posts last year with funding for these permanent appointments confirmed in the National Service Plan (NSP) 2022. Following sign off of the NSP 2022 in March, recruitment has now commenced. Recruitment progress for these posts will be closely monitored to identify challenges. It is acknowledged that recruitment for nursing-related grades can be challenging, however, there is an expectation that these posts will be attractive options for qualified candidates, particularly given significant improvements in overall infant-feeding arrangements nationally.

The breakdown of infant-feeding specialists currently in post in the CHOs is outlined in the table below.



Health service area	Health service area	Whole Time Equivalent
CHO 1	Cavan/Monaghan	1
CHO 3	Clare	1
	Limerick	due Q2
	North Tipperary	1
CHO 4	North Lee	1
	West Cork	0.8
CHO 5	South Tipperary	0.5
CHO 6	Wicklow South	0.5
	Dublin South East	0.5
	Dun Laoghaire	0.5
	Wicklow North	0.5
CHO 8	Longford/Westmeath	1
Total		8.3

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

Seán McArt
General Manager Primary Care
National Community Operations