



Bainisteoir Ginearálta Cúram Príomhúil  
Cúram Sláinte Pobail Thoir

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17<sup>th</sup> November 2022

Deputy Neale Richmond, T.D.,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2

**Re Ref: PQ 55453/22**

**\*\*To ask the Minister for Health if his attention has been drawn to reports that new parents in Dublin 18 are still not being offered public health nurse developmental checks on their new children, despite this service being offered to new parents in other areas in Dublin; if he is taking steps to address this; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Richmond,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health and Children for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

In Primary Care Public Health Nursing, the recruitment of Public Health Nurses (PHN) and Registered General Nurses (RGN) across Community Healthcare East (CH East), and in particular in Dublin South (DS) and Dublin South East (DSE), which includes the Dublin 18 area, has been extremely challenging for some time. There are a substantial number of vacancies, including posts allocated under the Enhanced Community Care Programme.

Community nursing services in DS and DSE are currently operating at 60% capacity. As a result of recruitment challenges, nursing staff are carrying increased workloads resulting in the operation of a prioritisation model of service delivery across all nursing services based on clinical need. This is necessary to ensure the delivery of a safe service.

Dublin 18 encompasses a Public health nursing service that spans across a number of networks and PHN service teams. For the purpose of clarity we have provided a response for each Health Centre in the area requested.

PHNs in Cabinteely Health Centre, Dublin 18 see all children at birth, 3 months, and at 9 - 11 months. There were delays with the 2 - 4 year developmental assessments due to staff shortages this year and they were working under prioritisation guidelines. However, they are now providing full duties and are working on catching up on the 2 to 4 year developmental checks.

Shankill Health Centre also covers part of Dublin 18. PHNs there are working under prioritisation guidelines due to short staffing. They see all children at birth, 3 months and



when possible at 9 to 11 months. It has not been possible to see children due their 2 to 4 year developmental assessments unless there were parental concerns that necessitated onward referral. From December 1st they will come off Prioritisation guidelines and will address those children due 2 and 4 year developmental.

PHNs in Leopardstown Health Centre, Dublin 18, are working under prioritisation guidelines. They include children living in Kilternan and Stepside. They see all children at birth, 3 months and when possible at 9 to 11 months. They will see children if a parent has a concern or if further follow up is required following an earlier development check. We are currently actively recruiting RGN's for the Leopardstown PHN area and will be hoping to resume the full child health service once achieved.

PHNs for the Sandyford area, Dublin 18, are located the in Ballinteer Health Centre and are working under prioritisation guidelines. They see all children at birth, 3 months and when possible at 9 to 11 months. They will see children if a parent has a concern or if further follow up is required following an earlier development check.

The Sandyford service will experience further PHN vacancies in the coming weeks due to statutory leave and the service will not return to full child health service until at least summer 2023, when we expect a number of DSE PHNs on maternity leave to return.

I trust this information is of assistance to you but should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Doherty', written over a horizontal line.

**General Manager Primary Care**