



13/07/2024,

Deputy Eoin Ó Broin  
Dáil Eireann,  
Dublin 2.

**PQ ref 26919/24**

To ask the Minister for Health for an update regarding the public health nurse service in the Newcastle area of Dublin mid-west; if staff shortages are still impacting service delivery; if child developmental checks for all children of age in the area have been fully reinstated; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

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Dear Deputy Ó Broin,

The Health Service Executive can confirm that the Public Health Nurses in the Newcastle Community Healthcare Area is experiencing a significant shortage of Public Health Nurses, Community Registered Nurses, Health Care Assistants and Clinical Nurse Specialists Continence Care.

There has been detailed planning of work at site-specific levels to proactively manage the impact of staff retirements, staff transfers, staff vacancies, maternity leave and sick leave (short and long term) on front-line services. Following the above, the PHN service in Dublin West has moved to a P1 service as per the National Caseload Prioritisation Procedure for PHN Service since 2022. This means that services at P2 to P3 will not be provided. This decision will regretfully significantly impact the delivery of services to service users in these priority areas.

Site-specific Contingency Plans continue to be refined monthly. Reconfiguration and integration of services, reorganisation of existing work and redeployment of staff will continue to underpin the department's contingency plans. Every effort has been made to recruit staff to fill existing vacancies. Regretfully the department was unsuccessful in recruiting student PHNs for the 2023-2024 programme. The department has also engaged with the Integrated Graduate Nurse Scheme and regretfully was unable to fill positions through this programme since its inception in 2022. Recruitment will progress for vacant posts once approval is received. Parents are welcome to contact the PHN Service if they have any concerns or queries regarding their child's development.

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

Yours sincerely,

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**Brian Kearney**  
Head of Primary Care  
Dublin South, Kildare & West Wicklow Community Healthcare