



15/07/2024,

Deputy Mark Ward,
Dáil Eireann,
Dublin 2.

PQ ref 11444/24

To ask the Minister for Health the number of public health nurses in the Lucan area; if developmental checks are being offered to newborns in the area for the appropriate month milestones; what options are available to parents if their children are not offered appointments due to staff shortages; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Ward,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in regard to your parliamentary question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for a response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

The Health Service Executive can confirm there are currently 7 wte Public Health Nurses in the Lucan Community Healthcare Area. The Public Health Nursing Service Dublin West 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 however the department has not been in a position to fill existing vacancies. Presently there is a moratorium on recruitment that further impacts on the delivery of care. 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. 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,

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