



Oifig Ceannasaí Oibríochtaí,  
Oibríochtaí Pobail, Cúram Priomhúil

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9<sup>th</sup> April 2024

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

**PQ 11699/24 - To ask the Minister for Health the number of developmental checks children in Dublin are missing due to a shortage of public health nurses; 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 11699/24) which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Public Health Nurses are healthcare professionals who provide a range of nursing services in the community including child development assessments in line with the National Healthy Childhood Programme. There were a total of 46,757 developmental checks carried out nationally in 2023 of these 16,397 were carried out in CHO 6, 7 & 9 which incorporate Dublin, Kildare and Wicklow areas.

The recruitment and retention of Public Health Nurses, particularly in the Dublin region, remains a challenge. Where shortfalls arise, we work to ensure that services are focused on identifying and supporting patients who have the greatest need and by enabling staff to be deployed where necessary to support these patients. Child development checks remain a priority and any parent with a concern should contact their GP or local Public Health Nursing service. The HSE management work in conjunction with the local areas to monitor the performance and address issues as they arise.

Notwithstanding the on-going resourcing challenges, improvement has been made in the area of child health as indicated by the latest data. The HSE remains committed to primary care child health services and continues to progress this in the best interests of child health.

The table below provides the percentage of children reaching 12 months within the 2023 reporting period who have had their 9-11 month PHN child health and development assessment on time or before reaching 12 months of age in the Dublin, Kildare and Wicklow area as requested. This is the latest data available.

CHO	Full Year 2023
CHO 6	85.50%
CHO 7	83.30%
CHO 9	90.60%

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,



**Seán McArt**

General Manager Primary Care  
National Community Operations