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22nd April, 2025

Mr. Pa Daly., T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ ref 16705/25

“To ask the Minister for Health the number of full-time public health nurse posts within CHO4, in 2023, 2024 and 2025 to date; the specific geographic area(s) within CHO4 that currently have no public health nurse in place; and if she will make a statement on the matter.”

Dear Deputy Daly,

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 for response.

The Number of Public Health Nurse in WTE					
	North Cork	North Lee	South Lee	West Cork	Kerry
2023	62	39	64.7	22.75	50
2024	43	39.87 inclusive of 4 WTE Student PHNs	65.4	23	41
2025	35.66 Plus 4 WTE Student PHN	41 plus 2 student PHNs	64.4	22.24	42.6

The numbers given above includes staff who may be on statutory leave, for example parental leave, sick leave and maternity leave.

In North Cork, there are 4 vacant Public Health Nurse post currently in Mallow, Charleville and Kanturk. The vacancy in Mallow is based in the Primary Care Centre and carry out child development and first visits. In this instance cross cover is being provided by the Community Registered General Nurse taking the caseload. In Charleville and Kanturk, cross cover is being implemented for child development and first visits by Public Health Nurse with Community Registered General Nurse's covering older persons.

In North Lee, there is 12 areas without a Public Health, these areas include Youghal, Midleton Templeboden/Lisgould, Cobh, Glouthane/ Little Island, Mayfield, Carrignavvar, St. Patricks, Knocknaheeny, Kerry Pike, City Centre, Farranferris and Sundays Well. The vacancies within these areas cross cover is provided for facilitating child health and Registered General Nurses are covering for adults and older person services

In South Lee, there are currently 6 Public Health Nurse Vacancies. These areas will not be without a Public Health Nursing service as in the event of vacancies cross cover is provided.

In West Cork, there is 1 vacant public health nurse within this area cross cover is provided.

In Kerry, there are 9 vacant Public Health Nurse posts currently in Dingle, Ardfert, Ballybunion, Castleisland, Kenmare/Killarney and Tralee. Please note that 7 of these posts have been approved for filing from the student sponsorship programme which commences in 2025. The Department of Public Health Nursing in Kerry mitigates against these vacancies via cross cover by Public Health Nurse or Registered General Nurse within the services.

Seirbhís sláinte a thógáil a bhfuil ár bpobal bródúil aisti
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HSE South West recognises the vital role that our Public Health Nurse (PHN) service plays in the Region. Our Public Health Nurses (PHNs) provide expert nursing and midwifery care across our communities. HSE South West PHNs work as part of a multidisciplinary team providing guidance and specialised support for their patients including people who are chronically ill at home, people with disabilities, expectant mother and mothers who have given birth recently, children, older people who live at home, amongst others.

To ensure continuity of care, our Public Health Nurses are supported by highly skilled Community Registered Nurses (RGNs), and cross-cover arrangements are in place to support areas experiencing staffing challenges. Public Health Nurses undergo specialised training, and recruitment campaigns are conducted annually to maintain service provision.

We wish to reassure the Deputy that Child Health developmental checks (and any other services appropriate) are being completed within appropriate clinical timeframes through cross-cover arrangements, ensuring that children and families continue to receive the care they need.

If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

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HSE South West