



Oifig an Stiúrthoir Cúnta,  
Cúram Priomhúil Rochtain agus Comhthathú,

Seomra 243, Ospidéal Dr Steevens,  
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6<sup>th</sup> May 2025

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

**PQ 20230/25 To ask the Minister for Health her plans to provide the parents who have no public health nurses available to provide developmental checks with information of potential issues to look out for; and if she will make a statement on the matter.**

**- Jen Cummins**

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Dear Deputy Cummins,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (PQ 20230/25) which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Nationally the recorded metric for Child Development Checks is the percentage of children reaching 12 months within the reporting period who have had their 9-11 month PHN child health and development assessment on time or before reaching 12 months of age. As at February 2025 year to date 84.4% of all child health development assessments were completed as per the metric.

As part of the 2025 budget allocation provision has been made to recruit an additional 26.7 whole-time equivalent posts nationally, which is a welcome addition to the Community Nursing Service. These posts have been funded to support the community nursing service to meet their targets particularly in the area of child health. These posts are funded on a half-year basis in 2025, and their appointment should result in an increase in services supporting child health. Each Regional Executive Officer has been given the commissioning letters and are progressing recruitment at present.

Recruitment and retention of PHNs remains a challenge nationally, particularly in the Dublin area where there are difficulties with recruitment or retention. While recruitment efforts continue a number of short-term temporary solutions have been taken to prioritise resources where necessary. These include; integrating services, reorganising work, engagement with the Graduate Nurse Scheme to fill vacant positions, and in some cases redeployment of staff - these efforts continue to ensure that all areas retain a level of service. Where staff shortages arise, the HSE continues to prioritise and support patients who have the greatest need in the community.



A number of measures have recently been agreed to support increased intake to the Student Public Health Nursing programme. This includes the development of partnerships between acute and community nursing to provide graduate nurses with an opportunity for a clinical rotation to the community and also to initiate a similar opportunity for experienced registered nurses working within hospitals.

The HSE has a number of Mychild books which are disseminated by the PHNs at the specified developmental checks. These books are also available for free download via <https://www2.hse.ie/babies-children/pregnancy-child-books/> The HSE website also has a range of information on various topics associated with the National Healthy Childhood Programme available from the following link <https://www2.hse.ie/my-child/>. Our website is updated with the most up to date information on various topics throughout the year.

All our publications along with our website are an additional source of advice for parents but they are not a replacement for the PHN services. At any time, a parent with a concern about their child's development should contact their GP or Local Public Health Nursing service.

I trust this is of assistance.

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**Seán McArt**

General Manager

Primary Care Access & Integration