



Oifig an Stiúrthoir Cúnta,  
Cúram Priomhúil Rochtain agus Comhthathú,

Seomra 243, Ospidéal Dr Steevens,  
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20<sup>th</sup> February 2025

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

**PQ 2411/25 To ask the Minister for Health the measures she will take to ensure that preventative healthcare services, such as sufficient provision public health nurses, are adequately resourced to safeguard the health and well-being of children and families in the future.**

**- Gary Gannon**

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Dear Deputy Gannon,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (PQ 2411/25) which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

The HSE's National Healthy Childhood Programme (NHCP) is Ireland's universal programme of clinical care for all children to support them and their parents from birth. It is based on principles of prevention and early intervention and is overseen by HSE Child Health within Public Health. The programme supports delivery of child health services including new-born screening programmes, developmental assessments carried out by Public Health Nurses at defined time points, immunisations, infant feeding and lactation support.

There are currently 1,803 Public Health Nurses (1,511 WTE) employed in the Health Service Executive (HSE) with a further 26.7 WTE posts provided for in Budget 2025. These posts will proceed to recruitment as a priority within each region over the coming months in line with the budget allocation. While there has been challenges with the recruitment and retention of Public Health Nurses particularly in the Dublin area there are a number of work streams established to improve recruitment and retention of community nurses. These are broadly in the area of; recruitment of community nursing personnel, team approaches to community nursing, PHN education, the PHN Sponsorship Scheme and the PHN transfer panel.

The PHN service currently provides a cradle to grave model of public health nursing. The HSE welcomes the Department of Health's progress on a dedicated child health workforce, with specific reference to Strategic Action 3A; 'First 5: The Whole of Government Strategy for: Babies, Young Children and Their Families 2019-2028'.

I trust this is of assistance.

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**Seán McArt**

General Manager  
Primary Care Access & Integration