



11 August 2025

**BY EMAIL ONLY**

Deputy Marie Sherlock

Dáil Éireann

Leinster House

Kildare Street

Dublin 2

**Re: PQ42557/25 - To ask the Minister for Health the number of newborn hearing screenings that have missed target screening dates under each of the hospitals in the Dublin region, in tabular form and by date line missed; and if she will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Sherlock

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question which has been referred by the Minister for Health to the Health Service Executive for direct response.

The HSEs national Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Programme (UNHSP) commenced in Ireland in 2011, following publication of the report of the National Audiology Review Group. It has been implemented on a national basis since the end of 2013. The national UNHSP is a population level screening programme for infants and is an integral part of the health service.

With regards to screening timelines, the national UNHSP aims to have newborn hearing screening completed within 4 weeks of birth (corrected age<sup>1</sup>) with a national target of >95% for this metric. The UNHSP consistently achieves/exceeds this target, with >98% of eligible babies completing screening within 4 week in the years 2020-2024 inclusive<sup>2</sup>.

As illustrated in the table below, 99.4% of eligible babies completed screening within the target timeframe in hospitals in the Dublin region in 2024. On the rare occasions where screening is not completed within the target timeframe, this may be due to clinical reasons, such as instances where babies are unwell or receiving palliative care, or instances where a parent requests to rearrange an appointment, thereby delaying screening completion, or decides to withdraw consent for screening.

In response to this PQ, please find relevant data provided in the table below. The data in this table cover the time period of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024.

**Table 1: Newborn hearing screening, Dublin Region, 2024**

	Rotunda	National Maternity Hospital, Holles Street	Coombe	Total Dublin Region
Total number (and percentage) of eligible babies that completed screening within 4 weeks (corrected	8,255	6,570	6,392 (99.6%)	21,217

<sup>1</sup> *Corrected age: is the age a premature baby would be if they had been born on their due date, instead of being born premature*

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/child/newbornscreening/hse-childrens-screening-services-report-2023.pdf>



age)	(99.3%)	(99.5%)		(99.4%)
Total number (and percentage) of eligible babies that did not complete screening within 4 weeks (corrected age)	60 (0.7%)	30 (0.5%)	29 (0.4%)	119 (0.6%)
Total number (and percentage) of eligible babies who completed screening	8,315 (100%)	6,600 (100%)	6,421 (100%)	21,336 (100%)

Source: HSE National Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Programme

If you require any further information or clarification, please do contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Dr John Cuddihy

National Director of Public Health

MCRN: 16227