



15/04/2025

Deputy Shane Moynihan
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2.

PQ ref 14467/25 - To ask the Minister for Health the short-term and medium-term plans to improve the provision of public health nursing services in Dublin mid-west.

Dear Deputy Moynihan,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you regarding your parliamentary question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for a response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

The Health Service Executive can confirm that the Public Health Nursing Service are experiencing a significant shortage of Public Health Nurses, Community Registered Nurses, Healthcare Assistants and Clinical Nurse Specialists. There has been detailed planning of work at site-specific levels to proactively manage staff retirements, staff transfers, staff vacancies, maternity leave, and sick leave (short and long term) on front-line services.

Unfortunately, the staff shortages have meant that some areas have moved to a Priority 1 (P1) service as per the National Caseload Prioritisation Procedure for the PHN Service. Unfortunately, the activation of the National Caseload Prioritisation Procedure means that the service is prioritising essential services, and in some services will not be provided, and this includes developmental checks. This decision will regretfully impact the delivery of services to some users. Site-specific Contingency Plans continue to be refined monthly. Reconfiguration and integration of services, reorganisation of existing work, and redeployment of staff will continue to underpin the department's contingency plans. Parents are welcome to contact the service if they have specific concerns about their child's development

A number of measures have recently been agreed to support increased intake to the Student Public Health Nursing programme. This includes development of partnerships between acute hospitals and community partners to provide graduate nurses with opportunity for a clinical rotation to the community and also to initiate a similar opportunity for experienced registered nurses working within hospitals. This development is in its infancy but is one of a number of measures which will improve the Public Health Nursing workforce into the future.

The HSE recognises the importance of our workforce. The contribution, ability and dedication of employees are key to the delivery of quality health services. As part of the 2025 budget allocation, provision has made to recruit an additional 26.7 whole-time equivalent posts nationally of which 6 WTE allocated to the Dublin Midlands Region. These have been funded to support the community nursing service to meet their targets particularly in the area of child health. These posts will proceed to recruitment as a priority within each health region.

I trust this information is of assistance to you but if you have any queries or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Brian Kearney
Head of Primary Care

Dublin South City & West, Dublin South West, Kildare & West Wicklow Integrated Healthcare Areas, HSE Dublin & Midlands