



Ceann Seirbhíse, Cúraim Príomhúil
Cúram Sláinte Pobail Cabhán Dún na nGall
Liatroim Muineachán, Sligeach
An Clochar, Sráid an Choláiste, Béal Átha
Seanaidh, Co Dhun na nGall, F94 TPX4

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14th October 2025

Martin Kenny T.D.
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

Re: PQ 51092/25 To ask the Minister for Health if she is aware that the public health nurse service in the Sligo-Leitrim area is being reduced, with a move to a priority status service and will no longer deliver child health and development services; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Kenny

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.

I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position the following outlines the position of the Sligo/ South Donegal/ Leitrim/ West Cavan Integrated Healthcare Area.

The recruitment and retention of Public Health Nurses is proving to be a challenge, on a national basis. Regrettably, there are currently a number of vacant Public Health Nursing (PHN) posts in the Sligo, South Donegal/Leitrim, West Cavan (SSD/LWC) area. Consequently, a number of interim measures have been initiated to prioritise resources within the PHN Service in the SSD/LWC area.

One of these interim measures is the implementation of the HSE National Caseload Prioritisation Procedure for Public Health Nursing. This procedure provides guidance and clarity to nurses in the PHN Service, regarding the delivery of safe and effective care to clients with the highest identified clinical need, during priority status. Where staff shortages arise, the PHN Service continues to prioritise and support clients with the greatest need, in the community.

The letter which is issued to parents, from the PHN Service, states that their

“...next scheduled developmental assessment for your child will not be offered at the time that it is due. We are working to address the nursing staff shortage and will contact you as soon as we are in a position to offer you an appointment”.

Please find attached a copy of the letter being issued.



Public Health Nurses in adjoining areas provide cover in the SSD/LWC area, in order to ensure that all new mothers and their babies are prioritised, during the post-natal period. Also, during the summer months, the School Public Health Nurses provide support in areas where there are currently vacant PHN posts. This facilitates the completion of Child Development Screening for infants and children, who are overdue their screening.

Staffing resources will increase, as a number of Public Health Nurses are due to return to their posts in the coming week, following their respective temporary absences. In addition, four student Public Health Nurses, who are being sponsored by the PHN Service SSD/LWC, have recently commenced their (Postgraduate Diploma) in Public Health Nursing.

Please be assured that all children will receive an appointment for Child Health Screening. However, I acknowledge that, in some cases, it will be later than the recommended screening timeframe.

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

Yours sincerely

Aisling O'Neill
Acting Head of Service
Ceannasaí Seirbhíse, Cúram Príomhúil
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Enc



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Markievicz House
Barrack Street, Sligo
F91 XC84
Tel: 0719321828

Date:

PHN area:

Re: Provision of child health and development assessments by the Public Health Nursing service

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am writing to inform you that the Public Health Nursing Service is moving to priority status in your area. This means that due to a staff shortage, we must prioritise the services that we can provide.

Regrettably, the absence of a PHN assigned to this area is having an impact on delivering routine child health and development assessments. This means the next scheduled developmental assessment for your child will not be offered at the time that it is due.

We are working to address the nursing staff shortage and will contact you as soon as we are in a position to offer you an appointment.

In the meantime, the My Pregnancy and My Child books are available on the HSE Mychild.ie website and are a very good resource for information. The My Pregnancy Book provides advice for pregnancy and the first few weeks after birth. The My Child Books 0 to 2 years and 2 to 5 years provides advice to help you and your baby/child.

Please use the QR code below to access these books online.

Please contact your GP if you have any concerns about your child and/or your own health and well-being.

QR Code link to My Pregnancy and/or My Child books



Yours sincerely,

Maire McGetrick

Director of Public Health Nursing