



WORKBOOK FOR COMPLETION OF NATIONAL SCHOOL
VISION AND HEARING SCREENING METRICS

JAN 2025 V3

Background

Under Section 66 of the 1970 Health Act the health service is obliged to provide vision and hearing screening for all children attending Primary Schools.

Registered Public Health Nurses (RPHNs) working as part of the PHN team under the governance of the director of public health nursing provide this screening service.

Each Director of Public Health Nursing (DPHN) area has a dedicated team of RPHNs that work within the school service providing vision and hearing screening and in some cases also providing an immunisations service. Currently some DPHN areas have a designed local/regional school activity return, which the school PHN completes and returns monthly or annually as agreed.

Currently there are no national standardised returns for vision and hearing school screening. There are no national key performance indicators relating to vision and hearing school screening carried out by PHN's.

Development and piloting of national metrics and definitions for school vision and hearing

The development and implementation of these standardised national metrics and definitions came about as a result of significant consultation with school nurses across the country during 2021 and 2022 by the national lead for PHN services.

In Q4 2021 a working group was established to pilot and test the school vision and hearing metrics. The group membership was composed of DPHNs, ADPHNs with responsibility for school screening, School RPHNs, the National Healthy Childhood Programme and national metrics technical group.

In Q1 2022 the metrics and definitions were piloted and tested in two DPHN areas. The feedback from the pilot contributed to the final draft of metrics which will be introduced into all DPHN areas from Sept 2022 (Appendix I and II). This roll out was delayed as the NHCP had planned a review of the school screening service. To date this review has not taken place and in the interim these school metrics will be released for roll out in September 2024.

Education and Training for PHN's providing vision and hearing screening

There are no national standardised training programmes in hearing and vision school screening for RPHNs.

Work is ongoing at national level to develop standardised training content for school RPHNs in vision and hearing screening.

Bespoke education/training programmes are delivered locally and regionally and are provided by the specialist ophthalmology and audiology teams attached to the community or acute hospital services. Refresher training for newly appointed school RPHNs is facilitated locally.

National Standards for Vision and Hearing Screening

Vision and hearing screening by PHN's is underpinned by national guidance as follows:

HSE School Vision Screening SOP January 2018

National School Hearing Screening Procedure September 2024 (valid for one year only)

School Screening Cohorts

The Public Health Nursing Service undertakes hearing and vision school screening on an annual basis by targeting **students in the School Hearing and Vision Screening Programme cohort as part of the School Entry Hearing Screening Programme.**

The School Hearing and Vision Screening Programme Cohort includes students enrolled in:

1. Primary school junior infants
2. Special schools of junior infant class age equivalence (note some areas do not screen in special schools)
3. Home Schooled Programme i.e. when a child is educated at home rather than school. This is a constitutional right of parents enshrined in law under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000. (Home schooled children are required to register with Tusla from the age of 6 years to 18 years). Only children whose parents contact the PHN service will be screened. *

(Vision Metrics V1 to V5 and Hearing Metrics H1 to H5)

**(When parents contact the Alternative Education Assessment and Registration Service in Tusla to request a home education application form, they are sent a Frequently Asked Questions information sheet as part of the application form pack. This document is also available to download from our website <https://www.tusla.ie/services/family-community-support/alternative-education-assessment-and-registration-service/>*

Question 5 in the FAQ document relates to entitlement to benefits:

5. Does my child have the same entitlement to benefits as a child attending a recognised school?

Yes. All children and young people on the section 14 Register are entitled to the same status as a child receiving their education in a recognised school. Therefore, they are entitled to benefits in line with children attending a Department of Education and Skills School, such as; child benefit, eye and hearing tests, vaccination programmes etc. For more information in relation to these entitlements, please contact the relevant government department.)

Children outside the cohort

Children in classes other than the School Entry Hearing and Vision Screening Programme cohort may also be offered a PHN hearing and vision screen. All new children into the school in this academic year irrespective of child's age or class where there is an unknown or undocumented testing history should be offered screening. Metrics in respect of these children are also be collected and returned in the excel workbook.

(Vision Metrics V6 to V8 and Hearing Metrics H6 to H8)

Excel resources to support activity returns

1. A standardised excel spreadsheet for the annual return of all vision and hearing screening carried out in the previous school year (returns by network). The completion of this return is mandatory and should be returned to the DPHN office by the 10th of Sept of each year. This return is named **Annual School Screening Metrics**.
2. A standardised excel spreadsheet for the ongoing collection of vision and hearing metrics throughout the year. This is known as **School Screening Activity Tracker**. The use of this spreadsheet is optional. However, if you choose to use an alternative collection method please ensure that the activity collected is in line with the metrics and definitions in the **Annual School Screening Metrics** collection template.

Instructions for School PHNs commencing national data collection in Sept 2024

1. Familiarise yourself with this workbook and the **Annual School Screening Metrics** metric wording and definitions. There should be one workbook for each network.
2. Agree which data collection tool will be used to collect **ongoing** vision and hearing screening. (If not the optional **School Screening Activity Tracker** then ensure alignment with the national metrics and definitions).
3. The **School Screening Activity Tracker** is the minimum dataset for school screening. Individual areas may collect and return additional information as requested by a DPHNADPHN.
4. The totals from vision and hearing screening carried out in the school and clinic are transferred from the **School Screening Activity Tracker** into the **Annual School Screening Metrics** when the screening for a particular school is completed. This entry can be done once school screening is complete or at the end of the year when all screening is complete before submission for 10th Sept. The schools screened in academic year 24/25 will be returned in September 2025.
5. All vision and hearing screening carried out in the school setting and health centre/PCC location are counted for the purposes of these metrics.

6. In the **Annual School Screening Metrics** you only have to enter into the tab named **Vision and Hearing metric returns**. The **summary page** is automatically populated.
7. **Annual School Screening Metrics** completed should be sent to line manager before 10th of Sept each year.

Instructions for ADPHN/DPHN completing the annual CIF sheet

1. Ensure that returns have been received from schools screening PHNs/Teams per network
2. Amalgamate all of the data from these returns. Use a blank **Annual School Screening Metrics** excel sheet to amalgamate all of the returns.
3. Enter the information from all the returns data into the tab named **Vision and Hearing metric returns**. The **summary page** is automatically populated.
4. The information from the **Summary Tab** is the information to be transferred to the HSE **CIF sheet**

Appendix I

PRIMARY CARE – School Entry Vision Screening Metrics September 2024

The Public Health Nursing Service school vision screening programme undertakes vision screening on an annual basis by targeting **students in the School Vision Screening Programme cohort**.*

The School Vision Screening Programme Cohort includes students enrolled in:

1. Primary school junior infants class/classes
2. Special schools of junior infant class age equivalence (note some areas do not screen in special schools)
3. Home schooled Programme i.e. When a child is educated at home rather than school. This is a constitutional right of parents enshrined in law under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000. (Home schooled children are required to register with Tusla from the age of 6 years to 18 years). Only children whose parents contact the PHN service will be screened)

The vision screening may be undertaken in;

- A school setting
- or
- In a clinic setting if the child is not in attendance on the day of the vision screen or is home schooled

Therefore, the metrics collected are inclusive of all children in the school vision screen programme cohort who had school entry vision screening undertaken by the School Public Health Nurse or area PHN in both of these settings.

This data will be collected by Local Health Office and Community Healthcare Organisation and returned on an annual basis by 10th September each year

Please note that all vision screening carried out in the school or in a clinic setting are counted for the purposes of each named school return including mop up appointments and repeat appointments.

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Completion of School VISION Screening by Public Health Nurses

1.	Number of children in the school vision screening programme cohort* offered a school entry vision screen	<p>All children in the school vision screening programme cohort* are offered a vision screen by the PHN via an invitation letter and or consent form issued through the school to their parent/guardian. The total number of children enrolled in the class i.e on the class list will receive this letter and consent form.</p> <p>Count and record the total number of children in the school vision screening programme cohort* at the time of the scheduled screening who are offered a school entry vision screen by the PHN service.</p>
2.	Number of children in the school vision screening programme cohort* eligible **for PHN school entry vision screening	<p>This is a count of the number of children in the school vision screening programme cohort*, who are eligible **for school entry vision screening carried out by the PHN service and for whom there is a signed consent</p> <p>Count children in the school vision screening programme cohort* for whom signed consent has been received including those:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. who are absent at the time of the scheduled vision screen in school or at a follow up clinic 2. who do not attend (DNA) at the time of the scheduled vision screen in school or at a follow up clinic

PRIMARY CARE – School Entry Vision Screening Metrics September 2024

		<p>3. who currently wear prescription glasses (as per HSE School vision Screening SOP 2018)</p> <p>Exclude children in the school VISION screening programme cohort *</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Who are under the care of HSE Primary care ophthalmology/orthoptic/optometry/eye care team (HSE School Vision Screening SOP 2018) Who were previously screened in junior Infants using Logmar (if this is known)
3.	Number of eligible** children in the school vision screening programme cohort* who had a PHN school entry vision screen	<p>This is a count of the number of eligible** children in the school vision screening programme cohort* who had a school entry vision screen undertaken by a PHN in either the school or the clinic setting.</p> <p>Include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> children whose screen was completed (either in the school or clinic eg follow up appointments)** children where the screen was attempted but not completed (i.e. where the child was unable to co-operate with the screen). ** <p>Exclude:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> children for whom consent was not received children not in the school vision screening programme cohort*** <p>***Operationally these children may have a screen undertaken but are not counted for the purposes of this metric. Rather they are <i>counted in metric number 6 Number of children outside of the PHN School Entry Vision Screening Programme cohort* offered a PHN Vision screen.</i></p>
Children Referred for Diagnostic Assessment (Vision) following a School Entry Vision Screen		
4.	Number of eligible* *children in the school vision screening programme cohort* who were referred for diagnostic vision assessment following a PHN school entry vision screen	<p>This is a count of the number of eligible* *children in the school vision screening programme cohort who failed to complete and or did not pass the PHN school entry vision screen and therefore required referral for diagnostic vision assessment.</p> <p>Include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> children where the school entry vision screen was attempted but not completed (unable to co-operate) children for whom there were concerns arising from the school entry vision screen. <p>Exclude</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> children whose parents refuse an onward referral/
5.	Percentage of eligible ** children in the school vision screening programme cohort who were referred for diagnostic vision assessment following a PHN	<p>This is an automatic calculation of the number of eligible children** in the school vision screening programme cohort who were referred for diagnostic vision assessment following a PHN school entry vision screen expressed as a proportion of the eligible children in the school vision screening programme cohort who had a PHN school entry vision screen, multiplied by 100. This will be</p>

PRIMARY CARE – School Entry Vision Screening Metrics September 2024

	school entry vision screen	calculated automatically within the PHN metric excel worksheet
Other Public Health Nurse Vision Screening		
6.	The number of eligible** children outside of the PHN School Entry vision Screening Programme cohort) offered a PHN vision screen	<p>This is a count of the number of eligible** children in classes other than the school vision screening programme cohort that were offered a PHN vision screen.</p> <p>Include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. children in classes other than the school vision screening programme cohort where there is parental or school concern re vision 2. children that may have transferred into the school and where there is an unknown or undocumented testing history 3. children in the school vision screening programme cohort who have been screened previously where there is a parental or school concern re vision
7.	Number of eligible **children outside of the PHN school entry vision Screening Programme cohort who were referred for diagnostic vision assessment following a PHN vision screen	<p>This is a count of the number of eligible **children outside of the school vision screening programme cohort* who failed to complete and /or did not pass the PHN school entry vision screen and therefore required referral for diagnostic vision assessment.</p> <p>Include eligible** children outside of the school vision screening programme cohort</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. where the screen was attempted but not completed (unable to co-operate) 2. children did not pass the school entry vision screen. <p>Exclude</p> <p>1 Children Whose parents refuse an onward referral</p>
8.	Percentage of eligible** children outside of the PHN School Entry vision Screening Programme cohort who were referred for diagnostic vision assessment following a PHN school vision screen	<p>This is an automatic calculation of the number of eligible** children outside of the PHN school entry vision screening programme cohort who were referred for diagnostic vision assessment following a PHN vision screen expressed as a proportion of total number of eligible children outside of the PHN School Entry vision Screening Programme cohort who were referred for diagnostic vision assessment following a PHN school vision screen multiplied by 100. This will be calculated automatically within the PHN metric excel workbook. As per number 5</p>

PRIMARY CARE – School Entry Hearing Metrics Dataset Definitions September 2024

The Public Health Nursing Service school hearing screening programme undertakes hearing screening on an annual basis by targeting **students in the School Hearing Screening Programme cohort**.*

The School Hearing Screening Programme Cohort includes students enrolled in:

1. Primary school junior infants class/classes
2. Special schools of junior infant class age equivalence (note some areas do not screen in special schools)
3. Home schooled Programme i.e. When a child is educated at home rather than school. This is a constitutional right of parents enshrined in law under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000. (Home schooled children are required to register with Tusla from the age of 6 years to 18 years). Only children whose parents contact the PHN service will be screened)

The hearing screening may be undertaken in;

- A school setting
- or
- In a clinic setting if the child is not in attendance on the day of the hearing screen or is home schooled

Therefore the metrics collected are inclusive of all children in the school hearing screen programme cohort who had school entry hearing screening undertaken by the School Public Health Nurse or area PHN in both of these settings.

This data will be collected by Local Health Office and Community Healthcare Organisation/LHO and returned on an annual basis by 10th September each year.

Please note that all hearing screening carried out in the school or in a clinic setting are counted for the purposes of each named school return including mop up appointments and repeat appointments.

Completion of School Hearing Screening by Public Health Nurses

1.	Number of children in the school hearing screening programme cohort* offered a school entry hearing screen	<p>All children in the school hearing screening programme cohort* are offered a hearing screen by the PHN via an invitation letter and or consent form issued through the school to their parent/guardian. The total number of children enrolled in the class i.e. on the class list will receive this letter and consent form.</p> <p>Count and record the total number of children in the school hearing screening programme cohort* at the time of the scheduled screening who are offered a school entry hearing screen by the PHN service.</p>
2.	Number of children in the school hearing screening programme cohort* eligible **for PHN school entry hearing screening	<p>This is a count of the number of children in the school hearing screening programme cohort*, who are eligible **for school entry hearing screening and for whom there is a signed consent</p> <p>Include those:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. who are absent at the time of the scheduled hearing screen in school or at a follow up clinic 2. who do not attend (DNA) at the time of the scheduled hearing screen in school or at a follow up clinic <p>Exclude children in the school hearing screening programme cohort *</p>

PRIMARY CARE – School Entry Hearing Metrics Dataset Definitions September 2024

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Who are repeating Junior Infants i.e. children where there is documented evidence of hearing screening having been completed previously Who currently wear hearing aid(s) - hearing aids, bone anchored hearing aids and cochlear implants With a diagnosed hearing loss Who are currently under review with the Community Audiology Service Who are under active review with an Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) team for ear issues With Programmable Ventriculoperitoneal (PVP) shunt. These children should not undergo hearing screening in school. On receipt of consent forms these children should be referred directly to Audiology if not already under their care <p>* National School Hearing Screening Procedure 2025</p>
3.	Number of eligible** children in the school hearing screening programme cohort* who had a PHN school entry hearing screen	<p>This is a count of the number of eligible** children in the school hearing screening programme cohort* who had a school entry hearing screen undertaken by a PHN in either the school or the clinic setting.</p> <p>Include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> children whose screen was completed (either in the school or clinic eg follow up appointments)** children where the screen was attempted but not completed (i.e. where the child was unable to co-operate with the screen). ** <p>Exclude:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> children for whom consent was not received children not in the school hearing screening programme cohort*** <p>***Operationally these children may have a screen undertaken but are not counted for the purposes of this metric. Rather they are <i>counted in metric number 6 Number of children outside of the PHN School Entry Hearing Screening Programme cohort* offered a PHN hearing screen.</i></p>
Children Referred for Diagnostic Assessment (Hearing) following a School Entry Hearing Screen		
4.	Number of eligible* *children in the school hearing screening programme cohort* who were referred for diagnostic hearing assessment following a PHN school entry hearing screen	<p>This is a count of the number of eligible* *children in the school hearing screening programme cohort who were unable to complete and or did not pass the PHN school entry hearing screen and therefore required referral for diagnostic hearing assessment.</p> <p>Include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> children where the school entry hearing screen was attempted but not completed (unable to co-operate) children for whom there were concerns arising from the school entry hearing screen. <p>Exclude</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> children whose parents refuse an onward referral
5.	Percentage of eligible ** children in the school hearing screening	<p>This is an automatic calculation of the number of eligible children** in the school hearing screening programme cohort who were referred for diagnostic</p>

PRIMARY CARE – School Entry Hearing Metrics Dataset Definitions September 2024

	programme cohort who were referred for diagnostic hearing assessment following a PHN school entry hearing screen	hearing assessment following a PHN school entry hearing screen expressed as a proportion of the eligible children in the school hearing screening programme cohort who had a PHN school entry hearing screen, multiplied by 100. This will be calculated automatically within the PHN metric excel worksheet
Other Public Health Nurse Hearing Screening		
6.	The number of eligible** children outside of the PHN School Entry Hearing Screening Programme cohort) offered a PHN hearing screen	<p>This is a count of the number of eligible** children in classes other than the school hearing screening programme cohort that were offered a PHN hearing screen. In the course of the school health programme, school RPHNs may become aware of other children outside the target groups where there is a concern about hearing. The school RPHN should use professional clinical judgement to assess these children on a case-by-case basis and offer screening or advise referral to GP/Audiology where appropriate</p> <p>Include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. children in classes other than the school hearing screening programme cohort where there is parental or school concern re hearing 2. children that may have transferred into the school where there is an unknown or undocumented testing history 3. children in the school hearing screening programme cohort who have been screened previously where there is a parental or school concern re hearing
7.	Number of eligible **children outside of the PHN school entry Hearing Screening Programme cohort who were referred for diagnostic hearing assessment following a PHN hearing screen	<p>This is a count of the number of eligible **children outside of the school hearing screening programme cohort* who failed to complete and /or did not pass the PHN school entry hearing screen and therefore required referral for diagnostic hearing assessment.</p> <p>Include eligible** children outside of the school hearing screening programme cohort</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. where the screen was attempted but not completed (unable to co-operate) 2. children did not pass the school entry hearing screen. <p>Exclude</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children whose parents refuse an onward referral
8.	Percentage of eligible** children outside of the PHN School Entry Hearing Screening Programme cohort who were referred for diagnostic hearing assessment following a PHN school hearing screen	<p>This is an automatic calculation of the number of eligible** children outside of the PHN school entry hearing screening programme cohort who were referred for diagnostic hearing assessment following a PHN hearing screen expressed as a proportion of total number of eligible children outside of the PHN School Entry Hearing Screening Programme cohort who were referred for diagnostic hearing assessment following a PHN school hearing screen multiplied by 100. This will be calculated automatically within the PHN metric excel workbook. As per number 5</p>