



19/11/2024

Deputy Patrick Costello  
Dáil Eireann,  
Dublin 2.

**PQ ref 34720/24**

To ask the Minister for Health for an update on the efforts his Department is making with the HSE to ensure that developmental checks by the public health nurse resume in Old County Road; and if he will make a statement on the matter. – Patrick Costello

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Dear Deputy Costello,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in regard to 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 HSE is aware of difficulties in relation to the recruitment and retention of PHNs within the Dublin South West IHA Area. 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. 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. Approvals have been received to recruit a number of nursing staff, which is progressing at present. The indications at this point suggest that there may be an insufficient number of applicants to fill current PHN vacancies and are working with the national community oversight group to explore further opportunities for community nursing recruitment and retention in primary care.

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. This means that the service is prioritising essential services, and some services will not be provided, including certain developmental checks. This decision will regretfully impact the delivery of services to some users.

Parents are welcome to contact the service if they have specific concerns about their child's development.

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