

Eimear O Sullivan

From: Laura Fogarty
Sent: Monday 29 June 2026 15:41
To: Eimear O Sullivan
Subject: FW: HEA-MO-02526-2026

Hi Eimear,

Please see email from Jennifer Carroll MacNeill TD, Minister for Health.

Regards

Laura Fogarty

Oifigeach Foirne Cúnta
Assistant Staff Officer

Pobal
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From: Ministers Office <noreplymo-health@corr.cloud.gov.ie>
Sent: Monday 29 June 2026 09:55
To: COM - Customer Care Counter <info@sdublincoco.ie>
Subject: HEA-MO-02526-2026

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HEA-MO-02526-2026
29th June 2026

Dear Ms. O'Sullivan,

I wish to thank you for your correspondence in relation to the motion agreed by elected Members at the Lucan, Palmerstown and North Clondalkin Area Committee Meeting on the provision of Public Health Nursing services, specifically the delivery of child health and development checks in areas of Dublin South West and Dublin South City and West.

Upon receipt of your correspondence, officials in this Department sought an update on this matter from the Health Service Executive (HSE). Having received that update, I can now confirm the following.

The HSE have advised that the HSE Dublin and Midlands Region is experiencing challenges in relation to the recruitment and retention of Public Health Nursing staff within the greater Dublin area. In some areas where recruitment is a challenge, prioritisation of need has had to take place in line with immediate clinical needs and national guidelines, and as a result access to some Public Health Nursing services such as child health and development checks has been delayed or limited.

The HSE have advised that all referrals received by the Public Health Nursing service are triaged, prioritised and placed on waiting lists, with caseloads being actively managed to ensure that the patients with the highest need can be cared for in the community. The HSE have further advised that in areas impacted by high levels of PHN vacancies that several short-term, temporary solutions to prioritise resources and service provision in line with clinical needs are being undertaken.

Within the three Community Healthcare Networks (CHNs) of Lucan, Clondalkin and Ballyfermot and Palmerstown, the HSE has advised that it continues to review the service needs and prioritise services for recruitment in line with the HSE's Pay and Numbers Strategy. Under the HSE National Service Plan 2026, approval has been granted for 6 additional Whole Time Equivalent (WTE) Public Health Nurses (PHNs) to support the increased clinical need in Dublin South City and West and Dublin South West. These six PHN posts are currently progressing through the recruitment process.

As requested, the numbers of children awaiting assessment is detailed as follows:

No. of children awaiting assessment across Lucan CHN, Clondalkin CHN and Ballyfermot and Palmerstown CHN

- Children aged between 9-11 months: 1,170
- Children aged between 21-24 months: 1,793
- Children aged between 46-48 months: 3,608
- Children over 48 months: 297

In 2023, the HSE established a National Oversight Group with a specific focus on Community Nursing services, to address recruitment and retention issues through several workstreams. This group is progressing the recommendations from this work. Measures that have been implemented include improvements to the PHN salary scale and salaries for Sponsorship Scheme students. Positively, the introduction of new measures based on recommendations, has contributed to an increase in the number of applicants to the Public Health Nurse Sponsorship Programme in 2024 and 2025, which is the main supply source for PHNs in Ireland.

I understand and wish to fully acknowledge the concern parents and caregivers feel when access to these important services is limited. The Department has been assured by the HSE that at any time, a parent with a concern about their child's development can contact their GP or local Public Health Nursing service to discuss their concerns. I would also like to assure you that the Department is committed to ensuring that the

Public Health Nursing service has the capacity to deliver a full range of services including child health and development checks and we will continue to work with the HSE on this.

Thank you again for corresponding on this matter, should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Jennifer Carroll MacNeill TD
Minister for Health