



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,
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23rd December 2019

Deputy Louise O'Reilly,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
e-mail: louise.oreilly@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy O'Reilly,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the following parliamentary questions, which were submitted to this department for response.

PQ 51947/19

To ask the Minister for Health the number of children on the speech and language therapy initial assessment waiting list; and the number waiting less than 4, 4 to 12 and more than 12 months, respectively by LHO in tabular form.

PQ 51948/19

To ask the Minister for Health the number of children on the speech and language therapy further treatment waiting list; and the number waiting less than 4, 4 to 12 and more than 12 months, respectively by LHO in tabular form.

HSE Response.

Speech and Language Therapy Services are provided through Primary Care Teams in Community Healthcare Organisations to children and young people requiring assessment, diagnosis and treatment of speech, language and communication difficulties and feeding and swallowing difficulties.

Primary Care Operations compiles the data for Speech and language waiting lists and have provided the most recently available data to answer this query. The tables in the attached appendices give the following information:

- Appendix 1 attached shows the number of children awaiting Initial Speech and Language Therapy Assessment up to the end of October 2019.
- Appendix 2 attached shows the number of children awaiting further Speech and Language Therapy at the end of October 2018.

The HSE is aware of the numbers of children and adults waiting for therapy services and is fully cognisant of the stress this can cause to families. One of the key priorities for the HSE is to improve waiting times for therapy services by implementing a revised model of care for children's Speech and

Language Therapy services and Psychology services and develop new models for Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy services.

In addition to the significant numbers of additional posts allocated to Primary Care and to Social Care under the Progressing Children's Disabilities Programme in recent years (see further details below), the HSE is committed to using innovative approaches, involving public, voluntary and private providers, to achieving a targeted reduction in therapy waiting lists.

The HSE is fully committed to working in partnership with service providers to achieve maximum benefits for children with complex needs, and aims to ensure that resources available are used in the most effective manner possible.

Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People (PDS)

The HSE is rolling out the Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People (PDS) Programme, which requires a reconfiguration of all current HSE and HSE funded children's disability services into geographically-based Children's Disability Network Teams (Early-Intervention and School-aged or 0-18 Teams). This Programme aims to achieve a national equitable approach in service provision for all children based on their individual need and regardless of their disability, where they live or where they go to school. Based on the recommendations of the Report of the National Reference Group on Multidisciplinary Services for Children aged 5-18 Years (2009), its objectives are:

- ✓ One clear pathway to services providing equity of access for all children with disabilities, according to their need.
- ✓ Effective teams working with partnership with parents and Education to support children in achieving their potential.
- ✓ Available resources used to the optimum benefit for children and their families.

PDS is achieving this by forming partnerships between all the disability organisations in an area. The staff resources are then pooled according to expertise in the different types of disabilities to form local Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs). The CDNTs will then provide for all children with significant disability, regardless of presenting needs.

In tandem with Health service reform which seeks to have Health and Social Care "Networks" in place, HSE is well underway in terms of establishing a total of 96 Children's Disability Networks across each of the nine CHOs. A key enabler to establishment of the remaining Children's Disability Network Teams is the recruitment of the Children's Disability Network Managers. The recruitment process for these posts is well advanced and the HSE is awaiting the outcome of an Industrial Relations process before appointing the successful candidates. It is intended that Children's Network Disability Services will be outcomes focussed, which is an approach setting out services to support children and young people to achieve outcomes. In addition, while recognising the lived experience of families, disability services should also aim to support families to achieve certain outcomes.

Please note that **all** HSE Areas planning reconfiguration continue to have significant Early Intervention and School Age Services in place, provided either directly by the HSE, or by voluntary service providers funded by the HSE, such as Enable Ireland, Kare, Muriosa Foundation, St. John of God Services, Brothers of Charity Services, St. Michael's House, Cope Foundation, CRC, Daughters of Charity Services etc.

National Policy on Access to Services for Children with a Disability or Developmental Delay

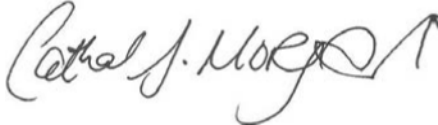
National HSE Disability and Primary Care are working together collaboratively with Community Health Organisations via their Chief Officers to support implementation of the HSE's National Policy on Access to Services for Children with a Disability or Developmental Delay. This policy will provide a single point of entry, signposting parents and referrers to the most appropriate service (Primary Care for non-complex functional difficulties and Children's Disability Network Teams for complex functional difficulties).

Additional funding for Therapeutic services across both Disability and Primary Care

NSP 2019 has provided for an additional 100 new therapy posts to be implemented over 2019/ 2020 to the Children's Disability networks. This is additional to existing resources in this area as follows:

- The above should be considered in light of previous investment secured by the HSE for therapeutic services which has been invested in the Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People (0-18s) Programme (PDS). Since 2014, the roll out of the PDS has entailed targeted investment of €14m and the provision of 275 additional therapy staff, to increase services for children with all disabilities.
- In 2013, additional funding of €20m was provided to strengthen primary care services. This comprised over €18.5m for the recruitment of over 260 primary care team posts and over €1.4m to support community intervention team development.
- There was also a €4m allocation within the 2016 Service Plan to facilitate the recruitment of Speech and Language Therapists to address waiting lists as part of the overall Speech and Language Therapy waiting list initiative within Primary Care and Social Care. The allocation provides for an additional 83 posts.
- In addition, the recruitment of a further 40 posts in Occupational Therapy (OT) commenced in Quarter 4, 2018. Currently the OT Service Improvement Working Group is reviewing options pertaining to the allocation of posts across CHO Areas. This is being done in conjunction with the findings of the OT Service Improvement report for Primary Care.

Yours sincerely,



**Dr. Cathal Morgan,
Head of Operations - Disability Services,
Community Operations**

Appendix 1

Speech and Language Therapy - Number of 0-17 years old patients waiting for Initial Assessment - October 2019							
LHO	0 to 4 Mths	4 months & 1 day - 8 months	8 months & 1 day - 12 months	12 months & 1 day - 18 months	18 months & 1 day to 24 months	>24 months	Total
Cavan Monaghan	388	109	62	3	0	0	562
Donegal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sligo Leitrim	14	0	0	0	0	0	14
CHO1	402	109	62	3	0	0	576
Galway	360	19	7	0	0	0	386
Mayo	250	0	0	0	0	0	250
Roscommon	41	0	0	0	0	0	41
CHO2	651	19	7	0	0	0	677
Clare	172	12	4	0	0	1	189
Limerick	364	103	13	0	0	0	480
North Tipperary East Limerick	162	95	8	0	0	0	265
CHO3	698	210	25	0	0	1	934
Kerry	157	0	0	0	0	0	157
North Cork	160	44	0	0	0	0	204
North Lee	350	62	0	0	0	0	412
South Lee	328	37	33	57	36	104	595
West Cork	74	0	0	0	0	0	74
CHO4	1,069	143	33	57	36	104	1,442
Carlow Kilkenny	198	6	0	0	0	0	204
South Tipperary	192	35	0	0	0	0	227
Waterford	134	19	0	0	0	0	153
Wexford	231	262	189	7	0	0	689
CHO5	755	322	189	7	0	0	1,273
Dublin South East	122	36	19	22	17	0	216
Dun Laoghaire	120	50	13	10	12	0	205
Wicklow	6	12	27	0	0	0	45
CHO6	248	98	59	32	29	0	466
Dublin South City	168	91	31	44	3	0	337
Dublin South West	242	57	36	94	88	205	722
Dublin West	156	245	168	58	13	0	640
Kildare West Wicklow	383	117	4	0	0	0	504
CHO7	949	510	239	196	104	205	2,203
Laois Offaly	319	0	0	0	0	0	319
Longford Westmeath	270	123	75	0	0	0	468
Louth	238	0	0	0	0	0	238
Meath	64	42	0	0	0	0	106
CHO8	891	165	75	0	0	0	1,131
Dublin North	519	303	113	40	8	0	983
Dublin North Central	151	231	155	6	0	0	543
Dublin North West	373	281	107	73	0	0	834
CHO9	1,043	815	375	119	8	0	2,360
Total	6,706	2,391	1,064	414	177	310	11,062

Appendix 2

Speech and Language Therapy - Number of 0-17 years old patients waiting for Further Therapy - October 2019							
LHO	0 to 4 Mths	4 months & 1 day - 8 months	8 months & 1 day - 12 months	12 months & 1 day - 18 months	18 months & 1 day to 24 months	>24 months	Total
Cavan Monaghan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Donegal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sligo Leitrim	11	0	0	0	0	0	11
CHO1	11	0	0	0	0	0	11
Galway	528	109	70	1	47	17	772
Mayo	84	3	0	0	0	0	87
Roscommon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CHO2	612	112	70	1	47	17	859
Clare	169	156	53	0	14	1	393
Limerick	356	203	107	0	58	35	759
North Tipperary East Limerick	91	93	49	0	0	0	233
CHO3	616	452	209	0	72	36	1,385
Kerry	233	90	2	0	0	0	325
North Cork	148	70	40	0	35	0	293
North Lee	187	268	177	29	44	12	717
South Lee	164	178	91	16	27	17	493
West Cork	220	103	32	0	8	0	363
CHO4	952	709	342	45	114	29	2,191
Carlow Kilkenny	70	84	21	0	8	0	183
South Tipperary	0	196	295	0	2	0	493
Waterford	5	38	17	1	18	3	82
Wexford	70	105	87	1	64	29	356
CHO5	145	423	420	2	92	32	1,114
Dublin South East	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dun Laoghaire	10	0	0	0	0	0	10
Wicklow	12	14	0	0	0	0	26
CHO6	22	14	0	0	0	0	36
Dublin South City	131	170	86	3	88	77	555
Dublin South West	250	183	136	0	151	4	724
Dublin West	214	353	242	34	113	77	1,033
Kildare West Wicklow	106	21	0	0	0	0	127
CHO7	701	727	464	37	352	158	2,439
Laos Offaly	53	58	29	0	53	0	193
Longford Westmeath	299	171	74	0	0	0	544
Louth	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Meath	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CHO8	352	229	103	0	53	0	737
Dublin North	666	612	191	0	0	0	1,469
Dublin North Central	59	110	68	0	6	0	243
Dublin North West	310	176	91	0	16	0	593
CHO9	1,035	898	350	0	22	0	2,305
Total	4,446	3,564	1,958	85	752	272	11,077