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8th July, 2019

Mr. Kevin O'Keeffe, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ ref 26662/19

"To ask the Minister for Health his plans to reduce the waiting list for paediatric occupational therapy in view of the two year wait to access this service in the Cork and Kerry region."

Dear Deputy O'Keeffe,

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.

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare (CKCH) Occupational Therapy services presents with its most significant challenge in respect of paediatric services 5 – 17 year olds. This is due to historic resource deficits in paediatric occupational therapy services and is most evident in the North Lee area. The area has progressed business cases for funding developmental post in line with population need within the service planning process. All referrals to CKCH are waitlisted by the Paediatric Occupational Therapy Service based on the information provided on the referral form.

CKCH identified a once off allocation of funding to recruit additional Occupational Therapists to address the Paediatric Occupational Therapy waiting lists for children waiting over 1 year for assessment and/or intervention. This initiative, which commenced on a phased basis, is demonstrating an impact on the current paediatric occupational therapy waiting times. These improvements are occurring in the context of an overall increase in referrals to the Occupational Therapy service of 376 March to May 2019, in comparison with the same period in 2018.

In the area of highest challenge, North Lee, the number of the paediatric cohort aged 5-17 year olds, waiting over 52 weeks, has decreased from 729 to 606 March to May. The waitlist initiative has provided the capacity in 2019 to open an additional 285 paediatric cases.

If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Teresa O' Donovan
Head of Service - Primary Care,
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare