



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Social Care
South East Community Healthcare
c/o Community Care Headquarters
James' Green

Kilkenny

Telephone 353 56 7784600
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13th May 2019

Ms Mary Butler TD
Dail Eireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ 18577/19

To ask the Minister for Health the number of children under six years of age that are waiting for an ASD assessment in County Waterford in excess of a 6 and 12 month waiting period, respectively; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

PQ 18578/19

To ask the Minister for Health the number of children aged between 6 and 18 years of age with autism waiting in County Waterford for child psychology services, for example, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy and so on in excess of 6, 12 and 18 months, respectively; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

PQ 18579/19

To ask the Minister for Health the number of support staff employed in County Waterford to assist in the delivery of services to children with autism; the breakdown of those posts by relevant discipline; if there are deficiencies in posts; if so, his plans to address those deficiencies; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Butler

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Questions, which was submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

I have reviewed the matter and the following composite reply is the current position.

There have been significant year on year increases in the number of children applying for assessment, including Autism Disorder Spectrum (ASD) and all disability services which has led to delays in timeframes. It is acknowledged that given increased referral rates and demands for assessments and disability services, there is a requirement for additional resources to meet current need.

Within the disability service children are not waitlisted by diagnosis, but are waitlisted chronologically and prioritized based on need. As previously advised the disability services do not collect information that allows us to accurately answer your specific question, however below is the information that is readily available. Waiting times for therapies vary depending on the complexity of the needs of the child as well as the resources available in the department.

The table below outlines the waiting times for clients with a current diagnosis of ASD where known.

| Waiting times | Psychology | SLT | OT | Physiotherapy |
|----------------------|-------------------|------------|-----------|----------------------|
| 0-6 months | | | 14 | |
| 6 -12months | | | 18 | 4 |
| 12-18 months | | 9 | 17 | 2 |
| >18 months | | | 12 | 0 |
| Total | 128 | 9 | 61 | 6 |
| | | | | |

The Liaison Autism Worker is the only post specific to ASD children. While there are no other specific posts for ASD, most therapists cover all disability clients as well as primary care. The table below outlines the staff available to disability clients including those clients with a diagnosis of ASD.

| Staff | Whole Time Equivalent | Comment |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|---|
| Liaison Autism Worker | 1 | 0-18yrs |
| Social Worker | 3 | 0-6yrs |
| Case Manager | 1 | 0-18yrs |
| Dietetics | 0.2 | 0-6yrs |
| Nursing | 2 | |
| SLT | 8 | 0-18yrs |
| OT | 6.6 | 0-18yrs covers both primary care and disabilities |
| Psychology | 4.6 | |
| Physiotherapy | 0.8 | Social care |

The HSE acknowledged that given increased referral rates and demands for assessments and disability services, there is a requirement for additional resources to meet current need. The HSE's 2019 National Service Plan has recognised this and South East Community Healthcare has been successful in securing 15 additional post to improve access and assessments for children in Waterford and in counties Carlow, Kilkenny, South Tipperary and Wexford. These posts will initially be prioritised to support diagnostic assessment.

I trust this information is of assistance to you. Should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

PMcEvoy

Patricia McEvoy
General Manager, Disability Service- South East Community Healthcare