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Ruth Coppinger TD
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

03rd January 2020

PQ 49232/19: “To ask the Minister for Health if extra resources will be allocated to reduce the 12-month waiting time for assessment by an occupational therapist; and if he will make a statement on the matter” Deputy Ruth Coppinger

Dear Deputy Coppinger,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (Reference PQ 49232/19), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Occupational Therapy is one of a range of multi-disciplinary services provided through Community Healthcare Organisations. Occupational Therapy is a healthcare profession offering support to people with physical, psychological and social problems to enable them to live life to the fullest. Occupational therapists help people to do the everyday activities that they want to do and need to do when faced with illness, injury, and disability or challenging life events.

The HSE is working to ensure timely access to children and adults requiring an Occupational Therapy service, and to reduce long waiting times for this important service. All Community Healthcare Organisations are implementing local action plans to address waiting times. Plans include a focus on long waiters, cross cover arrangements, maximising the supports of administrative staff and the use of Occupational Therapy Assistants.

Approval has been given to employ 40 new Occupational Therapists in Primary Care services. The appointment of these new staff, planned for early 2020, will assist Community Healthcare Organisations in addressing long waiting times.

The HSE is committed to the provision of high-quality, safe and accessible Occupational Therapy services in community healthcare settings. In 2019 in the year to date, 321,436 people availed of Occupational Therapy Services, an increase of 8.1% over the number targeted in the 2019 National Service Plan..

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely
Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G. Crowley'.

Geraldine Crowley,
Assistant National Director,
Primary Care Strategy and Planning