



22nd May 2020

Deputy Stephen Donnelly,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 5390/20 - To ask the Minister for Health the number of children under 18 years of age waiting for an ophthalmology appointment in primary care at the end of March 2020 or the latest date available; and the number waiting less than 4, 4 to 12 and more than 12 months, respectively by LHO in tabular form

-Stephen Donnelly

Dear Deputy Donnelly,

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

The spread of COVID-19 is posing significant challenges for many service areas, including all Therapy Services. In light of these unprecedented challenges together with the Government's guidance on social distancing and on 'cocooning' for those aged over 70, the HSE has had to reassess its operation of Community Therapy Services nationally, to ensure that the assessed needs of those clients with the highest priority are met.

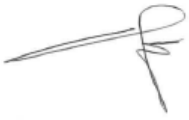
As a result of the national effort across all Community Healthcare Organisations throughout the country, some aspects of normal monthly reporting have been delayed. Preliminary data currently available reflects the period to the end of February 2020. Please find attached Appendix 1 which contains, in tabular form, details of the waiting lists in ophthalmology for patients aged 0 to 17 years as of February 2020.

Please note that where there is a zero in a particular field in most instances this means there is nobody on the waiting list for the particular LHO / period of time waiting. It is important to note that the overall total in the attachments represents the entirety of the waiting lists. The HSE is working to ensure timely access to children and adults requiring therapy services, and to reduce long waiting times for these important services.

As this is an evolving and unprecedented situation, the HSE will keep matters in review and will advise clients and/or family members accordingly.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Siobhán McArdle', written in a cursive style.

Pp

Siobhán McArdle,
Head of Operations Primary Care,
Community Operations