



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
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Health Service Executive
Dublin South, Kildare & West Wicklow
- Community Healthcare
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17th June 2020

Deputy Seán Crowe
Dail Eireann
Dublin 2

PQ 8244/20

To ask the Minister for Health the number of children on the waiting list for early years disability services for HSE in south western areas of Dublin; if the waiting time is 29 months from the date the referral was received (details supplied); the reason for the long delays in the area which predate Covid-19; if some children will miss out on supports in view of the fact they will be too old for early years intervention; the number of children on the list; if his attention has been drawn to the fact that this will impact the current lists; if waiting times vary dependent on resources; and the additional resources that will be provided to the area to reduce numbers and waiting times in order to comply with the Disability Act 2005, in view of the lengthening waiting lists

-Seán Crowe

Dear Deputy

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.

Apologies for the delay in replying to you. I respond as follows:-

Regarding reasons for waiting time and the number of children on the waiting list:

HSE Dublin South West is an area of extremely high socio economic deprivation with 32.7% of the population living in disadvantage (census 2016). As a direct result of disadvantage there is a very heavy demand for assessment and intervention for children presenting with a complex disability. The waiting time for HSE DSW children's disability services have been growing steadily since the establishment of the service in this area 10 years ago without a corresponding increase in staffing numbers.

There are currently 277 children on the waiting list for intake to the early 0-6 years team (EIT). The risk and impact on children and their families of the waiting time for intervention services has been well documented and reported by the service manager.

The vacancies in HSE Dublin South West Children’s Disability Services intervention teams are better understood in terms of the whole time equivalent staffing. Vacancies can fall into 3 categories i.e. resignation, maternity leave and extended sick leave. In addition it should be noted that there is no back fill permitted for the paid portion of maternity leave and that parental leave entitlements also impact on resources. The recruitment restrictions during 2019 significantly impacted the filling of vacant positions.

On average the team has been operating with approximately 62% of the allocated resource. This is further reduced when parental leave entitlements are factored into the equation.

The current funded whole time equivalent posts for the EIT are as follows:

| Funded WTE’s | WTE allocation | Vacant | Maternity Leave | Parental Leave |
|-----------------------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Psychology | 2 | 1 (over 12 mths) | N | N |
| Speech and Language Therapy | 3 | 1 | N | Y x 2 N x1 |
| Occupational Therapy | 2 | 1 | N | Y x1 |
| Physiotherapy | 1 | 1 (over 12 mths) | N | N |
| Social Work | 2 | 0 | 1 | N |

Regarding children becoming too old for early intervention services:

As waiting times have increases so also has the number of children reaching the age of 6 before they receive intervention from the EIT. The team provide for an extended period in order provide some support to the child/family before they transition to the school age service (SAT). The transition provides for continuity and the child will be seen by the SAT before other children on their team waiting list. The impact of this is that the SAT team waiting times are increasing on a monthly basis.

Regarding the impact on Assessment of Need:

Nationally DSW has one of the highest application rates for Assessment of Need under the Disability Act 2005.

The DSW EIT have not to date been engaged in conducting Assessments of Need and to do without so addressing the current capacity would further reduce their capacity to provide therapeutic intervention and result in an increase in waiting times.

I trust this information is of assistance to you but if you have any queries or should require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Deborah Jacob
Interim Head of Service – Disability Services