



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

Disability Service  
South East Community Healthcare  
Health Service Executive  
Lacken, Dublin Road  
Kilkenny, R95NV08

Telephone 353 56 7784319

21st September 2020

Mr. Johnny Mythen TD  
Dail Eireann  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2

**PQ 22451/20**

**To ask the Minister for Health the number of children waiting more than 3,6 and 12 months respectively in tabular form for an assessment for autism spectrum disorder in County Wexford; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

**PQ 22450/20**

**To ask the Minister for Health his plans and the timeline for the plans to deal with the delays in assessing children for autism spectrum disorder by the HSE in County Wexford; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Mythen

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

The Disability Services does not collect data in the specific format as outlined in your parliamentary question. However, the table below is the most recent data that is captured for children in Wexford awaiting a multidisciplinary ASD assessment.

**Table 1: Children awaiting ASD Assessment Wexford**

Waiting Time	0-6yrs	6-18yrs
<12 months	30	53
>12 months	126	168
<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>221</b>

It should be noted that some of the children on the waiting list in Table 1 above, if referred separately to other disciplines, for example Speech and Language (SLT), may already be in receipt of SLT intervention, but would

also remain on the multidisciplinary assessment waiting list. In addition some children may also have received intervention from Primary Care Psychology or National Education Psychology Service (NEPS).

The HSE regrets the difficulties in accessing multidisciplinary assessments and are seeking to reduce the waiting times and address issues arising for all children and their families through a number of measures including;

- The HSE continues to fill approved posts through in line with HSE Recruitment and National Pay-bill Management Framework including a Liaison Officer/Early Intervention Co-ordinator
- Appointed Children's Network Disability Managers (CDNM) to progress the implementation of Progressing Disability Service for children and young people under the National reconfiguration plan. During this reconfiguration phase the CDNM's will lead out on the reconfiguration of services with local managers and services.
- Waiting list validation is in operation with a particular focus on those who are waiting longest.

In line with public health guidance, at the outset of the pandemic, these services, along with many other services, were significantly reduced to limit exposure to Covid-19. At this time the HSE are reviewing best practice, based on Public Health guidelines to resume assessments.

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

Yours sincerely,



---

**Ms. Janette Dwyer**  
**Head of Service, Disability Service**  
**South East Community Healthcare**