

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare  
Office of Head of Primary Care  
HSE Community Services Building  
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V92 YA25

13<sup>th</sup> October 2020,

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Holly Cairns T.D.,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Dublin 2

**PQ ref 26557/20**

**“To ask the Minister for Health his plans to deal with the waiting lists for speech and language therapy in County Cork; and if he will make a statement on the matter”**

Dear Deputy Cairns,

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.

Children or adults, with or without a medical card or long term illness card, can be referred directly to the speech and language therapy service (SLT). There is no upper or lower age limit for eligibility to receive Primary Care SLT services. Clients who are under the care of a specialist service are not eligible to access Primary Care SLT services i.e. Early Intervention Team/Network Disability Team and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.


All referrals are prioritised for initial assessment and then, depending on the outcome of clinical assessments, children are waitlisted for the appropriate intervention. Children are seen for intervention, in line with their assessed need and where clinically indicated, within the available resources.

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare had suspended most services due to the COVID 19 pandemic and the necessary redeployment of staff since mid-March. The HSE had been slowly opening up community health services across the region. As you will be aware there has been a recent significant increase in the number of COVID-19 cases and this situation has necessitated the necessary further re-deployment of staff. Once staff are returned to core services the HSE will be actively engaged in dealing with the waiting lists.

Cork Kerry Community Health Care continues to fund four speech and language therapy posts to the funded voluntary organisations of COPE and Brothers of Charity to maintain priority services in those respective services. Primary Care Speech and Language Therapy has restored services to maximum levels within available staffing to address early Covid backlog and to manage waitlists.

If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



**Teresa O' Donovan**  
**Head of Service - Primary Care,**  
**Cork Kerry Community Healthcare**