



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

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

Telephone 353 56 7734804

26th April 2021

Mr. Johnny Mythen TD
Dail Eireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ 20027/21

To ask the Minister for Health the current waiting list for disability psychology services for children in County Wexford; the length of waiting time for same in tabular form; 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 Question, which was submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

I have reviewed the matter and the following is the current position.

There have been significant year on year increases in the number of children applying for assessments (including Disability Psychology Services) 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 demand and this has been included in the estimates for 2021. The psychology service is experiencing an unprecedented demand for this service.

In the Wexford area, the waiting list for children who require diagnostic assessment for queried Autism Spectrum Disorder is 485 children waiting. Table 1 below outlines the waiting period for queried ASD assessment.

Table 1: Children awaiting ASD Assessment Wexford

Waiting Time	0-6yrs	6-18yrs
<12 months	6	18
>12 months	225	236
Total	231	254

It should be noted that some of the children on the above waiting lists may already be in receipt of other HSE services or may have received some component of the assessment. 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 length of the ASD assessment list is a combination of a rise in the demand for assessments, these are multidisciplinary and the waiting list is impacted by the availability of other disciplines to co-facilitate the assessments.

There are a total of 84 children awaiting individual behavioural assessment and intervention. There are 43 parents awaiting to attend a psychology group intervention.

The Psychology Department are reaching the priority work which children who are awaiting cognitive assessment before they move to National School and are prioritising the information sessions provided to parents post confirmed ASD diagnosis.

The HSE regrets the difficulties in accessing Psychology Services and 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 in line with the HSE Recruitment and National Pay Bill Management Framework
- 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.
- Waiting list validation is in operation with a particular focus on those who are waiting longest.
- Joint submission between Primary Care and Social Care-Disability for National waiting list initiative funding to address the ASD waiting list.

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 safely 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. Anne Ennis
A/Head of Service, Disability Service
South East Community Healthcare