

6th December 2021

Deputy Steven Matthews T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2
E: steven.matthews@oireachtas.ie

Re: PQ 60271/21 – National Gender Service, St Columcille's Hospital

“To ask the Minister for Health if his attention has been drawn to the current wait time for the National Gender Clinic which stands at over two years from the initial referral; his views on the adequacy of this timeframe; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Steven Matthews”

Dear Deputy Matthews,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question seeking an update on waiting times for the National Gender Service in St Columcille's Hospital, which has been referred to the Ireland East Hospital Group for direct response.

I have had this matter examined and am advised that the waiting time for initial appointments at the National Gender Service is now over two years due to an ongoing increase in demand over the last number of years. In 2018, additional funding for staff was approved based on referral rates between 2014 and 2017. A number of new staff were recruited following approval of the 2018 business cases are continuing to work at the National Gender Service.

Since 2018 there has been a further increase in referral rates. While referral rates now seem to be plateauing, demand for the National Gender Service continues to exceed capacity. Between 2014 and 2018, the average annual referral rate was approximately 220 per year. It now exceeds 350 per year but does appear to be stabilising.

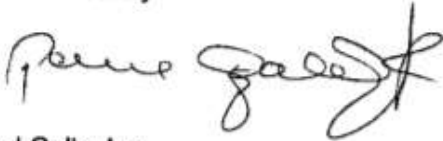
Given the further increase in demand since 2018, the waiting time for initial assessment continues to increase as demand continues to exceed capacity despite the previous investment. Next year, in the absence of additional investment, waiting times will exceed three years.



To address the continued increase in demand, the National Gender Service has submitted business cases for additional staff and clinical space that will meet the increase in demand. These business cases rest within the Acute Hospital and Mental Health Divisions of the HSE. Decisions on these business cases are pending. If these business cases are approved, then the National Gender Service will proceed to recruitment and will reduce the waiting list to a matter of months rather than years

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely



Paul Gallagher
Chief Director of Nursing and Midwifery