



23rd December 2021

Deputy James Lawless  
Dáil Eireann,  
Dublin 2.

**PQ 62046/21**

**To ask the Minister for Health the actions his Department is taking to tackle the waiting list for a child to be placed on the primary care paediatric occupational therapist (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. -James Lawless**

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Dear Deputy Lawless,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in regard to your parliamentary question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

Regrettably waiting times for access to direct interventions by Primary Care Occupational Therapy (PCOT) have become very protracted, mainly due to the HSE response to the Covid -19 pandemic, which has seen services paused for a period, then reduced as resources were redeployed to Testing and Vaccination functions. On resumption, capacity to work through wait lists has been reduced across all services in compliance with prevailing guidelines for public health and safety.

In an effort to address the resulting increase in wait times, the HSE has invested in many wait list initiatives. Currently, a campaign is in progress to recruit Occupational Therapists to the department who, when in post, will immediately begin to work to address the situation of those awaiting longest for access to OT services. In addition, the PCOT department is now using the internationally recognised best practice 3 Tier Model of Service whereby Occupational Therapists educate parents and give them the tools to help their own children, where appropriate.

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

Yours sincerely,

**Mary O'Kelly**  
**Head of Service, Primary Care**  
**Dublin South, Kildare and West Wicklow Community Healthcare**