



Neale Richmond TD
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

25th February 2021

PQ 10492/21

“To ask the Minister for Health his plans to allow child psychologists to conduct appointments by phone, including access to patient files and necessary information; and if he will make a statement on the matter. - Neale Richmond”

Dear Deputy Richmond,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (Reference 10492/21), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

The HSE is working to ensure timely access to children requiring psychology services and to reduce long waiting times for this important service. The HSE is committed to delivering efficient high quality psychology services to all eligible service users. In 2020 a total of 41,800 children and adult patients were seen by psychology services.

To address the current third wave of Covid infections there was a requirement to prioritise the level of services delivered during this period. Building upon the experience from earlier waves of the pandemic, Community Services have developed a prioritisation framework to support local decisions to be made on service prioritisation. This approach will ensure that services will be focused on identifying and supporting patients who have the greatest need and enabling staff to be deployed where necessary to support these patients. Where services are curtailed or reduced, this will be in line with clinical approval, a shared national position and with an appropriate risk assessment and communication with providers, service users and families. It is the intention of Community Services that full services would return as soon as is safe and practicable. Every option will be considered in the context of service recovery for child psychology services.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely

TJ Dunford
Head of Operations; Primary Care.
Community Operations.