

11<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Deputy Pádraig O'Sullivan,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Dublin 2.

**PQ Ref Number: 10624/21**

**“To ask the Minister for Health the steps being taken to reduce the waiting times for assessments of need under the Disability Act 2005 in the North Lee local health area; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”**

Dear Deputy O'Sullivan,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

I refer to the response issued to you on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021 in respect of **PQ 2810/21**. I have attached a copy of same for ease of reference.

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare acknowledges the lengthy waiting times that parents are experiencing under the Assessment of Need process which result from the volume of applications received. CKCH received the highest volume of AON applications in the country in 2020. There has been both a national and local focus in 2018, 2019, 2020 and into 2021 in relation to addressing the numbers of children waiting. These efforts, include staff working overtime to complete additional assessments, additional staff hired to clear the AON backlog and a number of assessments outsourced to private providers. This approach has been successful and will continue to yield a substantial increase in the number of assessments per month as we progress through 2021.

The HSE Disability Services is currently engaged in a major reconfiguration of its existing therapy resources for children with disabilities into multi-disciplinary geographically based teams, as part of its National Programme on Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People (0-18 years). Cork Kerry Community Healthcare area will re-configure Children's' Disability Services in the Cork area in April 2021. In Kerry and in West Cork have already re-configured and are now structured according to the PDS model. Cork North and Cork North Lee and South Lee are currently re-configuring. This reconfiguration will ensure equity of access to disability services and consistency of service delivery, with a clear pathway for children with disabilities and their families to services, regardless of where they live, what school they go to or the nature of the individual child's difficulties.

We sincerely regret that any child has to wait for an assessment or intervention. We fully appreciate the level of stress that families are experiencing due to the current waiting times. Cork Kerry

Community Healthcare would like to assure parents that we will continue to work on a number of initiatives aimed at reducing the waiting times for assessment in 2021.

I trust this clarifies the situation for you.

Yours sincerely



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**Ms. Jackie Daly,  
Interim Head of Disability Services,  
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare**

