



Mark Ward TD  
Dail Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

26<sup>th</sup> January 2021

**PQ 1812/21**

**“To ask the Minister for Health the waiting list time for first and review assessments for speech and language assessment and speech and language therapy from 2016 to date in 2021, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Mark Ward”**

Dear Deputy Ward,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (Reference 1812/21), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Note that for Speech and Language Therapy there is only one waiting list for assessments i.e. Initial Assessment waiting list. The latest available waiting list data is at the end of December 2020. Please see the table below showing the total number of patients (both children and adults) waiting for an Initial Assessment at December 2020 and the equivalent data for December 2017 – 2019. The 2016 data is not available.

<b>Speech and Language Therapy - Total Number of patients awaiting Initial Assessment</b>							
	<b>Waiting time intervals</b>						
	<b>0 to 4 months</b>	<b>4 months &amp; 1 day - 8 months</b>	<b>8 months &amp; 1 day - 12 months</b>	<b>12 months &amp; 1 day - 18 months</b>	<b>18 months &amp; 1 day to 24 months</b>	<b>&gt;24 months</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>December 2020</b>	<b>9,821</b>	<b>3,728</b>	<b>4,619</b>	<b>3,288</b>	<b>1,006</b>	<b>718</b>	<b>23,180</b>
<b>December 2019</b>	<b>10,562</b>	<b>3,251</b>	<b>1,487</b>	<b>594</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>16,710</b>
<b>December 2018</b>	<b>9,941</b>	<b>3,380</b>	<b>1,342</b>	<b>568</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>15,661</b>
<b>December 2017</b>	<b>10,028</b>	<b>2,429</b>	<b>874</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>13,790</b>

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.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic of level of service continued to be provided for those adult and paediatric referrals to speech and language for those referrals which were considered to be a priority.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely



**TJ Dunford**

Head of Operations; Primary Care.  
Community Operations.