



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Office of the Head of Primary Care
South East Community Healthcare
HSE Offices, Lacken
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24th June 2021

Ms. Verona Murphy TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ 24190/21

To ask the Minister for Health if his attention has been drawn to the delays in HSE audiology fitting services in County Wexford; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Murphy,

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

I have reviewed the matter and the following outlines the current position.

In recent years there have been increased referrals and services demands for audiology services with waiting lists in operation. Prioritisation following a referral to community audiology services, is designated by medical/clinical need of the client. Appointments are issued according to clinical priority and, in accordance with the date of receipt of referrals.

The Covid-19 pandemic has posed significant challenges for many service areas and therapy services including Audiology Services. In light of these unprecedented challenges together with the Government's guidance on social distancing there has been an impact on service capacity. There are ongoing efforts to ensure appropriate measures are in place for the safe delivery of services for both audiology clients and staff.

In addition to increased service demands, there have been staffing challenges in HSE audiology services in County Wexford following the resignation of a Staff Grade Audiologist for the adult service in December 2020. The National Recruitment Service expressed out the backfill of this post in May 2021 - however unfortunately there were no interested candidates. As an interim measure, agency staff was approved and filled. This agency Audiologist is currently undergoing training with a view to resuming adult services in Wexford. In addition, the Senior Audiologist in Wexford went on maternity leave in May 2021. Agency cover was approved and an Audiologist started and has been training since 29th April 2021 with a view to taking on some paediatric caseloads in June 2021.

The HSE is working to ensure timely access to children and adults requiring audiology services and to seek to reduce long waiting times for these services. Please be assured that Management from all areas

and personnel from Audiology Services continue monitor the waiting list on an ongoing basis in the context of available resources and prioritisation criteria.

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

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'J. Hendrick', written in black ink.

Jeanne Hendrick
A/Head of Service-Primary Care
South East Community Healthcare