



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

**Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,**  
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,  
31-33 Sráid Chaitríona, Luimneach.

**Office of the Head of Operations,**  
Disability Services/Community Operations,  
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2<sup>nd</sup> December 2021

Deputy Mark Ward,  
Dail Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.  
e-mail: [mark.ward@oireachtas.ie](mailto:mark.ward@oireachtas.ie)

Dear Deputy Ward,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the following parliamentary questions, which were submitted to this department for response.

**PQ 56829/21**

*To ask the Minister for Health the number of children that are waiting on a psychology service; the average waiting time after the completion of an assessment of needs by CHO area; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**PQ 56830/21**

*To ask the Minister for Health the number of interventions a child will have received since their initial intervention in cases in which a child is identified as needing a psychology service following a completion of an assessment of need in the first 12 months by CHO area in the past five years in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**PQ 56832/21**

*To ask the Minister for Health the number of children who are waiting on an occupational therapy service; the average waiting time after the completion of an assessment of needs by CHO area; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**PQ 56833/21**

*To ask the Minister for Health the average number of interventions received by a child after the completion of an assessment of needs in cases in which they are identified as needing an occupational therapy service from their initial intervention in the first 12 months by CHO area in the past five years in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**PQ 56835/21**

*To ask the Minister for Health the number of children who are waiting on a speech and language therapy service; the average waiting time after the completion of an assessment of needs by CHO area; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**PQ 56836/21**

*To ask the Minister for Health the average number of interventions received by a child after the completion of an assessment of needs in cases in which they are identified as needing a speech and language therapy service from*



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their initial intervention in the first 12 months by CHO area in the past five years in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

## PQ 56839/21

To ask the Minister for Health the average number of interventions received by a child after the completion of an assessment of needs in cases in which they are identified as needing physiotherapy from their initial intervention in the first 12 months by CHO area in the past five years in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

### HSE Response

Therapy services for children including Psychology, Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy and Physiotherapy are provided through Primary Care Teams in Community Healthcare Organisations to children and young people requiring assessment, diagnosis and treatment. Children with complex needs access these supports through Childrens' Disability Network Teams.

The HSE acknowledges the challenges in meeting the demand for children's disability services and is acutely conscious of how this impacts on children and their families.

The information regarding the number of Assessment of Need reports completed since 2017 is provided below. The detail regarding the number of these reports that identified a requirement for Psychology, Occupational Therapy, Speech and language Therapy and Physiotherapy is also provided in the tables below. This data is not available by CHO area. Data regarding the number of interventions received by a child after the completion of an assessment of needs is not collected.

HSE Disability Services does not gather data on the service provided through the acute hospital sector, primary care or mental health services.

Please note, children do not require an Assessment of Need under the Disability Act to access any health services

Year	AON Reports Completed	No. with identified need for Psychology	No. with identified need for Occupational Therapy	No. with identified need for Speech and Language Therapy	No. with identified need for Physiotherapy
2017	3660	1921	2254	2227	683
2018	4237	1948	2235	2114	722
2019	3312	1523	1738	1586	574
2020	3911	1803	2002	1910	571
2021	6204	2824	2935	2790	806

Primary Care Operations has compiled the latest available waiting list data at end of October 2021, for those aged 0 to 17 years and 11 months

- Table 1 in the Appendix includes the data for Psychology - Number of 0-17 years & 11 months old Patients waiting for treatment October 2021.
- Table 2 in the Appendix includes the data for Occupational Therapy - Number of 0-17 years & 11 months old Patients Awaiting First Time Assessment October 2021.
- Table 3 in the Appendix includes the data for Physiotherapy - Number of 0-17 years & 11 months old Patients waiting for Assessment October 2021.
- Table 4 in the Appendix includes the data Speech and Language Therapy - Number of 0-17 years & 11 months old patients awaiting Initial Assessment - October 2021.
- Table 5 in the Appendix includes the data for Speech and Language Therapy - Number of 0-17 years & 11 months old patients awaiting Initial Therapy - October 2021.
- Table 6 in the Appendix includes the data for Speech and Language Therapy - Number of 0-17 years & 11 months old patients awaiting Further Therapy - October 2021

As stated above, children do not require an Assessment of Need (AON) to access any of the services listed above. The waiting list data provided applies to children accessing these services regardless of whether or not they applied through the AON process.

The HSE acknowledges that significant levels of vital therapies were temporarily curtailed due to the current Covid-19 pandemic. The restoration and continuity of services is underway in a safe way in line with the very significant investment made by the State and funded agencies. We continue to work with service users and their families/carers to ensure that we achieve this aim.

### **Progressing Disability Services.**

A number of service improvements are being introduced that, when implemented, will help improve access to services including therapy services for children with disabilities and developmental delays.

The implementation of the Progressing Disability Services for Children & Young People (PDS) programme is agreed Government and HSE policy. This policy supports the reconfiguration of children's disability services to provide equitable, child and family centred services based on need rather than diagnosis. The PDS programme will ensure that services are provided for children with complex needs regardless of where they live or where they go to school.

The Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People (PDS) model addresses the previous inequity in service provision whereby there may have been an excellent service for some children and little or no service for others. This variance may have been linked to diagnosis, age group or geography. Under the PDS programme children's disability services are changing from diagnosis based to needs based, so that all children with a disability or developmental delay have access to the right service based on their needs no matter where they live.

The National Policy on Access to Services for Children & Young People with Disability & Developmental Delay ensures that children are directed to the appropriate service based on the complexity of their presenting needs rather than based on diagnosis. Many children and adults with a disability who have support needs can be effectively supported within mainstream child and adult health services. This policy will provide a single point of entry, signposting parents and referrers to the most appropriate service (Primary Care for non-complex functional difficulties and Children's Disability Network Teams for complex functional difficulties).

The HSE is committed to the full implementation of the Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People Programme (PDS). PDS is a significant change programme for the provision of services and supports for children from birth to 18 years of age, in line with Sláintecare and the Programme for Government, in order to:

- Provide a clear pathway and fairer access to services for all children with a disability
- Make the best use of available resources for the benefit of all children and their families
- Ensure effective teams are working in partnership with families and with education staff to support children with a disability to reach their full potential.

PDS aligns with two clear objectives of The Sláintecare Report to:

- Provide the majority of care at or as close to home as possible
- Create an integrated system of care with healthcare professionals working closely together.

### **Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs)**

In line with the PDS model, resources assigned to children's disability services are allocated to the 0 – 18 Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) rather than to a dedicated early intervention team or dedicated school age team.

91 Children's Disability Networks (CDN) are aligning to 96 Community Healthcare Networks (CHNs) across the country and each Children's Disability Network will have one CDNT providing services and supports for children aged from birth to 18 years of age. Early Intervention Teams and School Age Teams already in place are reconfiguring into 0-18 CDNTs. On full reconfiguration of children's disability services into CDNTs, every child across the country with complex needs arising from their disability will have access to a Children's Disability Network Team.

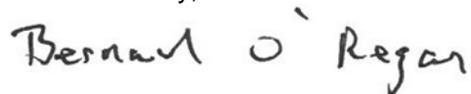
CDNTs are teams of health and social care professionals, including nursing, occupational therapy, psychology, physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, social work and others. The team works closely together in a family centred model, focusing on the child's and family's own priorities. Once all teams are in place, every child with

complex needs will have access to a team, regardless of the nature of their disability, where they live, or the school they attend.

Children and their families will have access to the full range of services and supports of the CDNT according to their individual needs. This includes universal, targeted and specialist supports, such as individual therapeutic intervention and access to specialist consultation and assessment when needed. Supports will be provided as is feasible in the child's natural environments - their home, school and community.

Services in most parts of the country have now reconfigured to CDNTs. The remaining teams in will be established before the end of 2021, thereby all 91 CDNTs will be in place and delivering services at that time.

Yours sincerely,



**Bernard O'Regan**  
**Head of Operations - Disability Services,**  
**Community Operations**



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Appendix

Table 1

Psychology - Number of 0-17 years & 11 months old Patients waiting for treatment October 2021											
CHO Area	0 - 4 Yrs 11 Months					5 - 17 Yrs 11 Months					TOTAL
	0 - ≤ 12 weeks	>12 weeks - ≤ 26 weeks	>26 weeks but ≤ 39 weeks	>39 weeks but ≤ 52	> 52 weeks	0 - ≤ 12 weeks	>12 weeks - ≤ 26 weeks	>26 weeks but ≤ 39 weeks	>39 weeks but ≤ 52	> 52 weeks	
CHO1 Total	11	16	4	4	6	114	109	89	105	148	606
CHO2 Total	20	13	11	12	24	78	59	46	39	174	476
CHO3 Total	12	16	12	8	13	47	82	67	21	136	414
CHO4 Total	76	37	28	18	25	429	381	144	118	856	2,112
CHO5 Total	41	30	12	4	6	219	160	118	96	156	842
CHO6 Total	50	32	15	9	3	107	82	40	23	8	369
CHO7 Total	45	40	21	25	88	130	155	154	124	1,232	2,014
CHO8 Total	42	19	9	2	0	253	161	55	45	2	588
CHO9 Total	39	53	19	9	125	173	194	145	106	1,270	2,133
National Total	336	256	131	91	290	1,550	1,383	858	677	3,982	9,554

Table 2

Occupational Therapy - Number of 0-17 years & 11 months old Patients Awaiting First Time Assessment October 2021											
CHO Area	0 - 4 Yrs 11 Months					5 - 17 Yrs 11 Months					TOTAL
	0 - ≤ 12 weeks	>12 weeks - ≤ 26 weeks	>26 weeks but ≤ 39 weeks	>39 weeks but ≤ 52	> 52 weeks	0 - ≤ 12 weeks	>12 weeks - ≤ 26 weeks	>26 weeks but ≤ 39 weeks	>39 weeks but ≤ 52	> 52 weeks	
CHO1 Total	8	15	10	6	67	84	123	143	90	898	1,444
CHO2 Total	48	25	5	9	1	60	68	90	67	145	518
CHO3 Total	16	11	2	1	1	81	125	29	28	41	335
CHO4 Total	142	120	41	32	36	503	662	349	220	914	3,019
CHO5 Total	80	81	67	44	217	142	306	208	199	1,775	3,119
CHO6 Total	34	12	3	0	8	70	59	32	27	219	464
CHO7 Total	38	48	30	20	59	110	133	135	116	602	1,291
CHO8 Total	294	297	150	80	253	287	313	128	103	946	2,851
CHO9 Total	26	40	12	20	45	132	188	162	142	811	1,578
National Total	686	649	320	212	687	1,469	1,977	1,276	992	6,351	14,619



Table 3

Physiotherapy - Number of 0-17 years & 11 months old Patients waiting for Assessment October 2021											
CHO Area	0 - 4 Yrs 11 Months					5 - 17 Yrs 11 Months					TOTAL
	0 - ≤ 12 weeks	>12 weeks - ≤ 26 weeks	>26 weeks but ≤ 39 weeks	>39 weeks but ≤ 52	> 52 weeks	0 - ≤ 12 weeks	>12 weeks - ≤ 26 weeks	>26 weeks but ≤ 39 weeks	>39 weeks but ≤ 52	> 52 weeks	
CHO1 Total	164	57	41	12	46	135	61	50	49	490	1,105
CHO2 Total	176	89	36	25	74	151	85	37	40	203	916
CHO3 Total	149	33	13	6	0	128	50	20	11	10	420
CHO4 Total	212	88	20	6	14	242	129	72	41	154	978
CHO5 Total	219	78	19	12	8	196	85	55	28	79	779
CHO6 Total	174	24	14	0	0	96	35	10	7	2	362
CHO7 Total	255	109	63	50	59	108	118	51	56	94	963
CHO8 Total	385	229	137	53	163	294	252	157	78	500	2,248
CHO9 Total	286	115	33	15	17	125	87	64	27	126	895
National Total	2,020	822	376	179	381	1,475	902	516	337	1,658	8,666



Table 4

Speech and Language Therapy - Number of 0-17 years & 11 months old patients awaiting Initial Assessment - October 2021							
CHO Area	0 to 4 Mths	4 months & 1 day - 8 months	8 months & 1 day - 12 months	12 months & 1 day - 18 months	18 months & 1 day to 24 months	>24 months	Total
CHO1	676	514	368	239	141	20	1,958
CHO2	711	413	171	39	24	3	1,361
CHO3	741	609	358	148	23	53	1,932
CHO4	970	435	38	4	13	15	1,475
CHO5	716	492	318	185	322	1	2,034
CHO6	155	46	0	0	0	0	201
CHO7	589	609	456	180	35	3	1,872
CHO8	374	194	108	57	50	5	788
CHO9	434	491	160	62	93	6	1,246
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,366</b>	<b>3,803</b>	<b>1,977</b>	<b>914</b>	<b>701</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>12,867</b>

Table 5

Speech and Language Therapy - Number of 0-17 years & 11 months old patients awaiting Initial Therapy - October 2021							
CHO Area	0 to 4 Mths	4 months & 1 day - 8 months	8 months & 1 day - 12 months	12 months & 1 day - 18 months	18 months & 1 day to 24 months	>24 months	Total
CHO1	82	22	13	0	0	0	117
CHO2	516	331	105	60	32	3	1,047
CHO3	262	135	80	27	21	44	569
CHO4	707	508	313	516	273	156	2,473
CHO5	286	342	197	155	153	470	1,603
CHO6	78	58	11	0	0	0	147
CHO7	138	40	16	29	42	21	286
CHO8	152	121	8	19	25	0	325
CHO9	536	528	352	219	191	45	1,871
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,757</b>	<b>2,085</b>	<b>1,095</b>	<b>1,025</b>	<b>737</b>	<b>739</b>	<b>8,438</b>



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Table 6

<b>Speech and Language Therapy - Number of 0-17 years &amp; 11 months old patients awaiting Further Therapy - October 2021</b>							
<b>CHO Area</b>	<b>0 to 4 Mths</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>
CHO1	213	230	94	110	44	0	691
CHO2	704	399	130	172	200	12	1,617
CHO3	579	354	281	90	91	103	1,498
CHO4	1,108	678	534	430	207	121	3,078
CHO5	158	361	512	169	324	103	1,627
CHO6	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
CHO7	160	201	82	103	156	85	787
CHO8	84	49	75	128	70	0	406
CHO9	499	614	392	300	256	33	2,094
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,505</b>	<b>2,889</b>	<b>2,100</b>	<b>1,502</b>	<b>1,348</b>	<b>457</b>	<b>11,801</b>



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