



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,
31-33 Catherine Street, Limerick.

T: 00353 (0) 61 483369

Suíomh Gréasáin/Website: <http://www.hse.ie>

22nd November 2021

Deputy Mark Ward,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
e-mail: 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 54627/21

To ask the Minister for Health the number of children that are waiting on speech and language therapy; and the length of waiting time for a first appointment by CHO area in tabular form.

PQ 54628/21

To ask the Minister for Health the number of children that are waiting on occupational therapy; and the length of waiting time for a first appointment by CHO area in tabular form.

PQ 54630/21

To ask the Minister for Health the number of children that are waiting on speech and language therapy; and the length of waiting time for a first appointment by CHO area in tabular form.

PQ 56837/21

To ask the Minister for Health the number of children who are currently waiting for appointments in speech and language therapy; the average waiting times by CHO area in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

PQ 56838/21

To ask the Minister for Health the number of children who are waiting on a physiotherapy 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 56851/21

To ask the Minister for Health the number of interventions received on average after a child is identified as needing a dietetics service after the completion of an assessment of needs since 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 Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Dietetics are provided through Primary Care Teams in Community Healthcare Organisations to children and young people requiring assessment, diagnosis and treatment of speech, language and communication difficulties and feeding and swallowing difficulties. Children with complex needs access these supports through Childrens' Disability Network Teams.

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

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

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.

The first step for all areas is the reconfiguration of existing staff resources into CDNTs. The staffing mix available in each area will be influenced by the historical development of services. For example, some areas may have a significant number of nurses available for reconfiguration, others may have family support workers or early educators.

Since 2019, 285 development posts have been allocated to children's disability services across the country. This is broken down as follows:

- 100 posts provided in NSP 2019
- 100 posts provided in NSP 2021

- 85 posts for services in special schools approved mid 2021

The range of posts recruited / in recruitment in 2021 include; dietitians, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, psychologists, speech & language therapists, nurses and some administrative support. These posts have been assigned based on a number of factors, including the existing ratio of staff to the number of children with disabilities in each area.

The special school posts were approved by the Minister of State for Disabilities to facilitate the provision of in-reach services to those special schools that have heretofore provided a school based service. These staff members will be employed as part of the new CDNTs and will report to the Children's Disability Network Manager. CHOs will ensure that the allocation of any posts to CDNTs is targeted towards providing appropriate interventions.

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



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

Table 1

Speech and Language Therapy - Number of 0-17 years & 11 months old patients awaiting Initial Assessment - September 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	269	214	114	137	102	0	836
CHO2	808	297	166	31	14	2	1,318
CHO3	685	500	402	136	25	66	1,814
CHO4	1,025	383	29	0	9	15	1,461
CHO5	711	462	349	138	348	6	2,014
CHO6	128	13	0	0	0	0	141
CHO7	618	505	573	239	35	7	1,977
CHO8	471	93	80	45	45	0	734
CHO9	663	570	325	178	297	196	2,229
Total	5,378	3,037	2,038	904	875	292	12,524

Table 2:

Speech and Language Therapy - Number of 0-17 years & 11 months old patients awaiting Initial Therapy - September 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	68	2	0	0	0	0	70
CHO2	466	249	113	82	29	3	942
CHO3	226	145	81	33	37	54	576
CHO4	757	442	293	546	235	156	2,429
CHO5	293	342	207	115	201	476	1,634
CHO6	33	63	18	0	0	0	114
CHO7	126	34	21	29	54	22	286
CHO8	106	107	6	31	27	2	279
CHO9	621	389	377	212	215	39	1,853
Total	2,696	1,773	1,116	1,048	798	752	8,183



Table 3

Speech and Language Therapy - Number of 0-17 years & 11 months old patients awaiting Further Therapy - September 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	170	65	36	96	45	0	412
CHO2	584	390	118	248	182	9	1,531
CHO3	543	320	291	115	89	94	1,452
CHO4	982	612	614	395	211	121	2,935
CHO5	160	371	501	160	421	95	1,708
CHO6	6	0	0	0	0	0	6
CHO7	157	150	80	123	205	87	802
CHO8	82	66	56	162	45	0	411
CHO9	686	639	460	259	403	23	2,470
Total	3,370	2,613	2,156	1,558	1,601	429	11,727

Table 4

Occupational Therapy - Number of 0-17 years & 11 months old Patients Awaiting First Time Assessment September 2021											
CHO Area	0 - 4 Yrs 11 Months					5 - 17 Yrs 11 Months					TOT AL
	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	11	9	11	55	52	121	113	76	873	1,329
CHO2 Total	53	44	19	19	83	50	82	137	115	798	1,400
CHO3 Total	14	16	2	1	1	69	126	30	32	37	328
CHO4 Total	165	87	52	34	41	766	433	346	202	1,016	3,142
CHO5 Total	184	153	144	98	468	210	372	264	301	2,145	4,339
CHO6 Total	18	10	3	1	8	74	68	34	24	234	474
CHO7 Total	38	42	20	20	63	102	110	106	81	788	1,370

CHO8 Total	278	277	110	66	199	338	432	202	164	997	3,063
CHO9 Total	131	133	135	103	465	141	223	167	141	1,219	2,858
National Total	889	773	494	353	1,383	1,802	1,967	1,399	1,136	8,107	18,303

Table 5

Physiotherapy - Number of 0-17 years & 11 months old Patients waiting for Assessment September 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	186	85	36	25	39	127	97	51	62	462	1,170
CHO2 Total	177	98	45	23	93	185	92	46	33	207	999
CHO3 Total	140	38	8	2	0	130	44	15	15	9	401
CHO4 Total	218	82	16	12	9	198	91	48	31	173	878
CHO5 Total	218	100	25	15	7	215	109	53	51	89	882
CHO6 Total	162	26	4	0	0	78	28	12	4	2	316
CHO7 Total	180	106	52	40	48	90	69	45	31	83	744
CHO8 Total	371	234	111	54	164	323	335	154	120	423	2,289
CHO9 Total	286	184	96	70	246	213	90	51	38	379	1,653
National Total	1,938	953	393	241	606	1,559	955	475	385	1,827	9,332

Table 6

Dietetics - Number of 0-17 years & 11 months old Patients waiting for treatment September 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	70	26	7	0	0	83	51	6	5	2	250

Total											
CHO2 Total	42	39	20	15	19	10	17	15	4	84	265
CHO3 Total	42	58	21	43	150	43	46	36	42	462	943
CHO4 Total	215	87	21	1	3	174	60	6	3	4	574
CHO5 Total	103	100	54	74	284	80	67	53	53	589	1,457
CHO6 Total	41	9	0	0	0	11	10	0	0	0	71
CHO7 Total	116	80	41	49	270	33	30	20	20	138	797
CHO8 Total	92	61	14	7	10	68	48	26	15	48	389
CHO9 Total	94	53	40	17	10	27	14	17	8	8	288
National Total	815	513	218	206	746	529	343	179	150	1,335	5,034

