



15th October 2021

Ms. Louise O'Reilly, TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

Email: louise.oreilly@oireachtas.ie

RE: PQ ref 48759/21

'To ask the Minister for Health if a catch-up programme will be put in place for developmental checks, assessment of needs and early intervention in north County Dublin given the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in reducing the number of checks, assessments and interventions that took place over the past 18 months.'

Head of Service for Disability

HSE Community Healthcare Organisation
Dublin North City & County,
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The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question which you submitted for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

Community Healthcare Organisation Dublin North City and County (CHO DNCC) can confirm we have received significant funding specifically to deal with our waiting lists for Assessment of Need (AON). While challenges still remain, we have made significant progress with reducing the AON waitlist and continue to work to reduce this further. A robust plan has been developed which includes availing of resources from within the HSE and from voluntary and private service providers to ensure this waiting list is eliminated as quickly as possible.

I would like to assure the Deputy that eliminating the waiting list is receiving the highest priority and attention by the Head of Service and the Chief Officer in CHO DNCC. Monthly reports are furnished to manage and monitor progress. Each CHO area is required to submit progress reports to the Department of Health and ultimately the Minister who has a keen interest in the delivery of this initiative in the shortest timeframe.

In relation to Early Intervention Services for children, CHO DNCC is working with all children's service providers to implement the Progressing Disability Services (PDS) programme of reform and will be developing Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNT). Services involved include all Section 38 Disability Service Providers and local HSE teams. There are now 12 Children's Disability Network Teams established throughout CHO DNCC since the 20th September 2021. This reform is part of a National Reform Programme - Progressing Disability Services - for children's disability services which aims to ensure equity of access to services for all children with complex needs arising from a disability.

Under the disability reform programme a consistent service model and access criteria, with a particular focus on family centred practice, will be adopted by all CDNTs. The teams will also adopt the National Prioritisation policy. Existing staff resources will be reconfigured and allocated to CDNTs who will support children from 0-18 years with complex needs. All children currently in receipt of disability services or waiting to access services will be supported to transition to their CDNT. We anticipate this will have a positive impact on timely access to services for all these young children going forward.

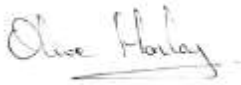
It is anticipated that CDNTs will develop a range of waiting list initiatives so that there is a level of support for all children and families requiring disability services. In addition, CHO DNCC has been allocated a number of development posts which, when recruited, will enhance the CDNTs capacity.

In relation to development checks, the HSE Public Health Nursing Service fully resumed on Monday 4th October 2021. All five core child developmental assessments will be offered as they fall due.

Concurrently, CHO DNCC is developing a plan to address the backlog of child developmental services. We are progressing the plan to commence implementation with the overage cohort, aged 48months and over, as soon as possible. We plan to contact all clients by phone and follow up with letters of appointments where indicated. We will then progress on to the next cohort 21-24 months and so on until all have been contacted.

I trust this information is of assistance to you but should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact this office.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Olive Hanley". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Ms Olive Hanley
Head of Service for Disability