



Mr Paul McAuliffe TD,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2

Head of Service Primary Care,
HSE Community Healthcare Organisation
Dublin North City & County,
Ballymun Healthcare Facility,
Ballymun, Dublin 9, DO9 C8P5.

21st December 2022

PQ 61102/22 – “To ask the Minister for Health his plans to improve the wait time for speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy assessments in CHO9; and if he will make a statement on the matter” -Paul McAuliffe TD

Dear Deputy McAuliffe,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you with information in the context of the above Parliamentary Question you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

Community Healthcare Organisation Dublin North City and County (CHO DNCC) are experiencing waiting times, due to a number of factors, including a growing population demands in our catchment area, difficulties associated with staff recruitment and retention and challenges associated with Covid-19. We are working hard to reduce these waiting times across the CHO.

Recruitment remains a continuous focus across all disciplines in CHO DNCC including Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy. CHO DNCC advertise across a wide range of channels including several recruitment platforms and social media. There is also physical attendance at Job Fairs, both in Ireland and the UK. A refer a friend scheme has been introduced to encourage referrals and communications on vacancies are issued weekly.

CHO DNCC Therapy Managers validate waiting lists, timeframes and triage referrals to ensure those in most need are prioritised. In addition please see below the waiting list initiatives from each of the Therapies:

Speech and Language (SLT):

- Under three years Speech and Language screening: recent referrals offered a screening phone call, followed by an appropriate therapeutic pathway, for an individual or for a group intervention.
- Adult Service – expand service delivery in 2023 with additional staffing
- Paediatric Service – to provide supports to those on the waiting list/screening and online workshops for those referred with a stammer or concerns about stammering.
- An SLT advice clinic is offered to families every month should they wish to attend one.
- The SLT team are recommencing an in-person group work.
- Waiting times are reduced by planning for therapy cycles and blocks in advance, balancing waiting times for assessment and therapy and also implementing attendance and discharge policies.
- The SLT team also use across area pathways, online and in person as another vehicle to provide intervention to families more quickly and thus manage their waiting times.

Physiotherapy:

- Waiting list initiatives include targeted clinics for the paediatric service and a planned operational focus for certain diagnostic groups for adults.
- Utilisation of groups where clinically appropriate to ensure optimal use of resources without compromising patient outcomes or experience.
- Group work recommencing in adult physiotherapy to reduce the Priority 2 waiting time.

Occupational Therapy (OT):

- A new service model is being introduced in 2023. It is a tiered approach and is currently developing universal and targeted intervention pathways such as home programmes, workshops and groups to offer to our service users and their families. It is envisaged that there will be a greater focus on parent coaching and empowering parents to take the lead in supporting their child's development. We will continue to offer individual assessments as required for new service users.
- Monthly advice clinic for parents for children waiting or seeking referral.
- Quarterly workshop to introduce clients to the service.
- Consultation with referring sources to ensure accurate information and appropriate referral pathway.
- Advice and resources provided to those waiting for therapy.

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

Yours sincerely,



Tom O'Brien
Head of Service Primary Care