



21st February 2022

Deputy Patricia Ryan
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2.

PQ ref 7393/22

To ask the Minister for Health if his attention has been drawn to delays being experienced in having children assessed by occupational therapists in CHO7 due to the redeployment of staff to the Covid-19 response; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

-Patricia Ryan TD

Dear Deputy Ryan,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in regard to your parliamentary question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

The HSE and Department of Health are keenly aware of the protracted waiting time for access to Occupational Therapy (OT) services, due to the redeployment of staff to Covid-19 functions at the onset of the pandemic in 2020. This response, to the nationally identified priority, persisted for some months, however all redeployed OT staff returned to their substantive roles, at the earliest opportunity. In addition, temporary Occupational Therapists were recruited as part of a paediatric wait list initiative, to assist in targetting those children waiting longest.

In line with Sláintecare objectives, additional OT posts have been funded, a number of which have been filled, and recruitment campaigns are in progress to fill the remainder. The OT service will continue to very hard to reduce wait times in line with these resources.

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

Yours sincerely,

Mary O'Kelly
Head of Service, Primary Care
Dublin South, Kildare and West Wicklow Community Healthcare