



Oifig Ceannasaí Oibríochtaí,  
Oibríochtaí Pobail, Cúram Príomhúil

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1<sup>st</sup> March 2022

Deputy Steven Matthews,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

**PQ 8320/22 - To ask the Minister for Health his views on the adequacy of existing mental health supports for children in County Wicklow; the number of children under 18 years of age who are waiting three months or longer to see a psychologist following a referral from a general practitioner; the steps he is taking to reduce wait times; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

**- Steven Matthews**

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Dear Deputy Matthews,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (PQ 8320/22) which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Primary Care psychology has long established roles in caring for children with mild-to moderate mental health needs or signposting those who need specialist services. In line with the National Access Policy, it provides an increasing level of service to those with non-complex needs or as yet undiagnosed/unrecognised needs.

There are currently 8,526 children and young people (under 18 years of age) who are waiting 3 months or longer to access primary care psychology services in Ireland. For information, the data provided does not contain a breakdown of the paths of referral onto the waiting lists.

In consideration of the children and young people waiting over 12 months to access Primary Care psychology services, Primary Care Operations and the Department of Health had provided additional funding to decrease the numbers of children and young people waiting over 12 months to access psychology services in 2021. This initiative is continuing for 2022.

Since the commencement of these additional measures, significant progress has been made to ensure the children and younger people who have been waiting the longest are seen.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

**Seán McArt**

General Manager Primary Care  
National Community Operations