

14th January 2022

Deputy Paul Murphy T.D.,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2  
E: [paul.murphy@oireachtas.ie](mailto:paul.murphy@oireachtas.ie)

Re: PQ 63493/21 – NGS

**"To ask the Minister for Health if his attention has been drawn to the waiting time for those seeking transgender health care (details supplied); if his attention has been drawn to the fact that just to be first seen is now a waiting time of over two and a half years; if his attention has been further drawn to the fact that according to a study carried out, this kind of waiting time is actively dangerous, considering the rates of both suicidal ideation and attempts among pretransition trans people; if his attention has been drawn to the fact that patients are forced to answer invasive questions regarding their sexuality, including various sex acts they have engaged in, the number of partners they have been with and the genders of these partners; his views on whether such questions are of zero clinical necessity; and if his attention has been drawn to the fact that patients have reportedly been refused treatment on the basis of them being autistic or having ADHD."**

Dear Deputy Murphy,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question seeking an update on the National Gender Service, which has been referred to the Ireland East Hospital Group for direct response.

I have had this matter examined and am advised that the waiting time for initial appointments at the National Gender Service is now over two years due to an ongoing increase in demand over the last number of years. In 2018, additional funding for staff was approved based on referral rates between 2014 and 2017. A number of new staff were recruited following approval of the 2018 business cases and continue to work at the National Gender Service.

Since 2018 there has been a further increase in referral rates. While referral rates now seem to be plateauing, demand for the National Gender Service continues to exceed capacity. Between 2014 and 2018, the average annual referral rate increased to approximately 270 per year. It now exceeds 300 per year but does appear to be stabilising.

Given the further increase in demand since 2018, the waiting time for initial assessment continues to increase as demand continues to exceed capacity despite the previous investment. Next year, in the absence of additional investment, waiting times will exceed three years.



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To address the continued increase in demand, the National Gender Service has submitted business cases for additional staff and clinical space that will meet the increase in demand. These business cases rest within the Acute Hospital and Mental Health Divisions of the HSE. Decisions on these business cases are pending. If these business cases are approved, then the National Gender Service will proceed to recruitment and will reduce the waiting list to a matter of months rather than years.

The National Gender Service aims to provide a holistic approach to gender care. They are the national adult service, providing care to residents in the Republic of Ireland. The NGS is a fully public service provided by the Health Service Executive (HSE) and St John of God Services based at St Columcille's Hospital, and work as a multidisciplinary team.

The National Gender Service is based on a Model of Care developed by the Mental Health Division in 2016 and approved by the Ireland East Hospital Group's Steering Group for the Development of a National Gender Service in 2018 (NGSMOC 2018). The service is governed by a Clinical Governance Committee, comprised of the clinical and administrative staff of the NGS, as well as the management and Clinical Directors of St Columcille's Hospital and Cluain Mhuire Services, St John of God Community Services.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely

Paul Gallagher  
Chief Director of Nursing and Midwifery



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