

22nd July, 2022.

Mr Thomas Gould, TD.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ ref 39201/22

“To ask the Minister for Health the number of persons in Cork that are currently waiting an appointment for early intervention broken down by therapy; the number who have been waiting less than 3, 3-6, 6-12 months and for more than 12 months, broken down in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”

Dear Deputy Gould,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Prior to reconfiguration in April 2021, children with two significant and ongoing needs attended the Early Intervention Teams from birth up to five and a half years of age. When a child aged out they were referred to Primary Care Services as indicated for intervention relevant to their needs. In that instance, team based interventions were not being provided.

It may be helpful if I provide some information on at the outset about the current service arrangements between the HSE and other independent providers. Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People Programme (PDS) is a significant change programme for the provision of therapeutic services for children from birth to 18 years of age.

PDS requires pooling together all resources, including staff, facilities and equipment, from the different voluntary agencies and the HSE providing specialist children’s disability services, in order to set up Children’s Disability Network Teams (CDNTs). A CDNT comprises of a team of health and social care professionals who will provide services for a specific geographical area aligning to the Community Healthcare Networks. All teams are in place since April 2021 and there are 14 CDNTs across Cork and Kerry.

A child’s access to services is based on his/her needs, i.e. a diagnosis is not be required. Instead of a service providing for children with one type of disability only, resulting in some children unable to access a service, each CDNT provides for all children with complex needs arising from their disability who live in that area. Children with non-complex needs receive services at Primary Care level.

Currently, the teams have large numbers of complex children on their caseloads who require an interdisciplinary team approach and this is provided on a needs basis due to priority and risk to child, young adult, and family in all environment such as home, school and in the community.

Disability Services does not gather data in the format that you have requested. However, please see below table which outlines the current caseload of children and young adults on each Childrens Disability Network Team:-

| CDNT | Current Caseload |
|--|-------------------------|
| Northwest Cork Childrens Disability Network Team | 650 |
| Northeast Cork Childrens Disability Network Team | 390 |
| East Central Cork Childrens Disability Network Tea | 565 |
| East Cork City Childrens Disability Network Team | 621 |
| Central Cork Childrens Disability Network Team | 563 |
| North Cork City & Blarney Childrens Disability Network Team | 554 |
| West Cork Childrens Disability Network Team | 845 |
| South East Cork City Childrens Disability Network Team | 641 |
| West Central Cork Childrens Disability Network Team | 766 |
| Carrigaline/Kinsale/Bandon Childrens Disability Network Team | 780 |
| South Cork City Childrens Disability Network Team | 455 |

It is the objective of the CDNTs to ensure that all children have timely access to the appropriate services, however the CDNTs have experienced significant challenges in the months since reconfiguration. Challenges include higher than predicted caseloads on each CDNT, restraints due to Covid as well as finite and limited publicly funded resources assigned to each network. The HSE and the Lead Agencies managing the CDNTs remain committed to ensure a safe, quality and timely service to children with disability and their families.

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare acknowledges the lengthy waiting times that children/young adults and their families are experiencing. We sincerely regret that any child/young adult has to wait for an assessment and both management and staff fully appreciate the level of stress that families are experiencing due to the current waiting times.

Disability Services continues to engage with the Service Providers to ensure that where possible, some level of service is maintained, based on prioritising those with the greatest need.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Yours sincerely,



**Ms. Majella Daly,
Head of Disability Services,
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare**

