



Oifig Ceannasaí Oibríochtaí,
Oibríochtaí Pobail, Cúram Príomhúil

Seomra 243, Ospidéal Dr Steevens,
Lána Steevens, Baile Átha Cliath 8.
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13th April 2022

Deputy Niamh Smyth,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 16775/22 - To ask the Minister for Health the action that is being taken to address lengthy waiting times that children are experiencing for services in occupational therapy, psychology, physiotherapy and speech and language therapy; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

- Niamh Smyth

Dear Deputy Smyth,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (PQ 16775/22) which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

Community Services are currently considering opportunities to address wait lists in the short, medium and longer term. The scale of the current waiting list challenge has increased for a number of factors including the reprioritisation of services during the pandemic response leading to increased numbers of people waiting and the complexity of their needs may have also increased. A range of measures to address waiting lists, including Occupational Therapy, Psychology, Physiotherapy and Speech and Language Therapy are being considered which could include testing the potential capacity and skills of the private sector, the feasibility of which will be determined by alignment with policy, clinical guidance, availability of appropriately qualified professionals and compliance with national GDPR and procurement rules and regulations.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Seán McArt'.

Seán McArt
General Manager Primary Care
National Community Operations