

22nd September 2022

Mr. Michael Healy-Rae, TD.,
Dáil Éireann
Dublin 2

PQ ref 42043/22

"To ask the Minister for Health the number of children who are on the waiting list in County Kerry for psychology services; and if he will make a statement on the matter."

Dear Deputy Healy-Rae,

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.

In preparing this response I have consulted with colleagues in Primary Care and Disability Services in regard to the position in their respective Care Groups.

Mental Health

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) services are designed for children and adolescents presenting with moderate to severe mental health needs. All referrals received to CAMHS services are triaged as per CAMHS Operational Guideline 2nd Edition Nov 2019. The referral is then either accepted or rejected at that point. There are two types of referral; an urgent referral and a routine referral. Every effort is made to prioritise urgent referrals so that young people with high risk presentations are seen as soon as possible and this is often within 24 to 48 hours. This may impact on wait times for presentations that are triaged, to be less severe

In relation to psychology in CAMHS the following is a breakdown of those that have been reviewed as suitable for CAMHS and awaiting psychology appointments:

North Kerry CAMHS

There are currently 7 people on the psychology waiting list. (The longest waiting time is four weeks). Over the past 3 months we have made a new staff grade appointment to North Kerry CAMHS bring it up to 2 WTE from a historic base of 1WTE. As such this team is now in line with VFC recommendations with sufficient psychology staff resource to meet anticipated population need.

South Kerry CAMHS

There are currently 12 clients on the internal psychology waiting list. In the wake of the Maskey report our senior psychologist on the South Kerry team resigned their post. We have in the interim increased the staff grade post on the team from 0.5 WTE to 1 WTE. We have also reassigned a Senior psychologist 2 days per week from West Cork CAMHS as an interim measure to maintain services. We have advertised the replacement senior post but unfortunately have not had applicants. We are working with senior management to continuously review the staff levels in the team and have proposed a business case for the appointment of a Principal Specialist grade psychologist for CAMHS in Kerry to offer high-level clinical expertise and governance. We have also received approval for a psychology assistant grade post for the team. This remains unfilled and we are awaiting the formation of a new national panel to fill this position in Quarter 4, 2022.

Primary Care

There are 448 children on the Kerry Primary Care Child, Adolescent & Family Psychology Service Waiting List as at the end of August 2022.

There are currently no clinical psychologist posts in Kerry and Primary Care services has initiated a sponsorship scheme for psychology with UCC.

Due to staff shortages and extensive demands on the service, there is a significant waiting list in place at this time. We are actively working to recruit psychologists to the service and will be reviewing the waiting list to identify priority needs and intervention pathways when staff are in place. Recruitment of psychologists is at a critical level across the country and has been included on the Critical Skills Occupations List (Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment) in June 2022.

Disability Services

Disability Services does not gather data in the format that you have requested.

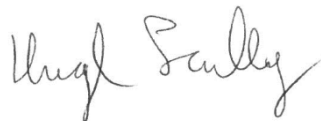
It may be helpful if I provide some information at the outset about the Childrens Disability Network Teams (CDNTs). A CDNT comprises of a team of health and social care professionals including Psychology who provide services for a specific geographical area aligning to the 3 Community Healthcare Networks in Co. Kerry.

A child's access to services is based on his/her needs, i.e. a diagnosis is not 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 CDNTs 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.

If I can be of any further assistance please feel free to contact me.

Kind Regards,



Hugh Scully
A/General Manager
Mental Health Services
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare