



Mr Alan Farrell TD,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

14th March 2023

PQ 10025/23 - *“To ask the Minister for Health how many children are waiting for their primary care occupational therapy initial appointment in the CHO9; and if he will make a statement on the matter”* – **Alan Farrell TD**

Dear Deputy Farrell,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you with information in the context of the above Parliamentary Question. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

The number of children waiting for their Primary Care Occupational Therapy (OT) assessment in Community Healthcare Organisation Dublin North City and County (CHO DNCC) is 2,386.

Waiting lists have unfortunately increased due to a range of factors including population growth in CHO DNCC, which has led to an increase in referrals for this age cohort. The service scope has also broadened, covering children with a wide range of developmental needs following implementation of the National Access Policy. At present, the waiting time is approximately 18-24 months. Assessments and interventions are provided to children if clinically indicated following a non-standardised assessment and information is gathered about the child from a parent or guardian or caregiver interview and parent or caregiver and teacher questionnaires, depending on which is relevant.

The Occupational Therapy Service are conscious of increased waiting times and as a result are looking at a new service model which will involve a tiered approach to OT Services for clients. This approach has successfully been used to reduce waiting times and increase service delivery in other primary care services nationally.

To improve access to the OT Team, CHO DNCC has introduced a series of measures, including a waiting list validation exercise, access to advice Clinics for Parents or Guardians of any children. During the advice clinics the OT shares ideas and strategies to help support the development of a specific skill area. For example;

- Personal care skills; washing, dressing, grooming, toileting, eating/drinking
- School work; handwriting, concentrating, sitting still in chair, copying from the board, organisation skills
- Play skills; cycling, throwing and catching a ball, playing with other children, engaging in after school clubs or hobbies

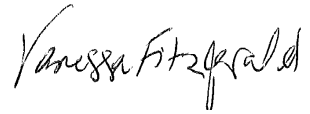
I have attached two flyers for the DNCC advice clinics for your information.

In addition Parent Education Webinars have been provided where clinically appropriate. Parents and caregivers are offered a Parent Information webinar once a child has been accepted onto the waiting list. This provides ideas for the parent or guardian or caregiver on how to support the child's development and provides signposting to other services. Parent education webinars which are part of the intervention process, they are available at the following link: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/1/lho/dublinnw/occupational-therapy-for-children/>

In conjunction with the new service model outlined above, additional resources have also been approved as part of the ongoing implementation and rollout of Sláintecare and once all posts have been filled, it is anticipated they will have a positive impact on waiting times.

I trust this information is of assistance to you but should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Vanessa Fitzgerald
Acting Head of Service Primary Care