

Frank Feighan TD
Dail Eireann
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

15th March 2023

RE: PQ 10061/23 To ask the Minister for Health the timeframe that key services and supports available to teenagers and young adults with autism in County Roscommon stay in place for each young person once diagnosis takes place; and if he will make a statement on the matter

Dear Deputy Feighan,

I refer to PQ 10061/23 uploaded to the PAD System on the 23rd February 2023 and due for response on the 13th March 2023 regarding representations that you have made to the Minister for Health. The HSE has been requested to reply directly to you on this matter. The following response outlines the position.

Community Healthcare West (CHW) are currently reconfiguring children's services and moving to the new Progressing Disability Services (PDS) for children and young people model. Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People Programme 0-18 (PDS) is a National HSE change programme for the provision of therapeutic services for children from birth to 18 years of age that aims to transform the way children's disability services are delivered. It is being rolled out nationally by the HSE in partnership with its funded voluntary organisations. There are nine (9) new Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) in CHW with seven (7) of these CDNTs led by the HSE with Enable Ireland and the Brothers of Charity Galway leading the other two (2) teams. Roscommon is covered by CDNT 9 and part of CDNT8.

There are a number of different pathways for autism assessment and diagnosis for children and young people involving a number of HSE services such as Primary Care, Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs), Child and Adult Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and private providers. Should further needs be identified during the assessment, such as access to the educational curriculum, mental health supports, respite, outreach etc., then a referral will be made to the appropriate agencies and services.

Children and young people (up to the age of 17 years 11 months) with a diagnosis of Autism with needs deemed appropriate for Primary Care Services may be referred to Roscommon Primary Care Child and Family Psychology Services for psychological interventions associated with mild-to-moderate mental health difficulties and behaviour-related difficulties. The waiting time for Roscommon Primary Care Child and Family Psychology Services is currently estimated at between 34 and 40 months. Primary Care Services offers families episodes of care, in that families are provided with defined interventions related to specific difficulties and are then discharged from services. Families may re-refer to Primary Care Services if needed and children are added to the existing waiting lists.

Mental Health Services are provided to all those referred with moderate to severe Mental illness. Mental Health Services do not provide services to children or adults with Autism specifically.

I trust that this response has clarified the matters that you have raised in this instance.

Yours sincerely


Breda Crehan-Roche
Chief Officer