

10th July, 2023

Denis Naughten T.D.
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

Re: PQ 29101/23

To ask the Minister for Health the number of children awaiting a psychology appointment in CHO1; the breakdown of the time they have been on the waiting list; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Naughten

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. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position in Community Healthcare Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim Monaghan and Sligo.

The below table provides a breakdown of the number of children awaiting psychology appointments in Community Healthcare Cavan Donegal Leitrim Monaghan and Sligo (CH CDLMS).

The number of children awaiting a psychology appointment in CH CDLMS and a breakdown of the time they have been on the waiting list				
Waiting List	Cavan/ Monaghan	Donegal	Sligo/Leitrim/ South Donegal	CH CDLMS Total
0-12 Weeks	132	44	24	200
12-26 Weeks	108	55	28	191
26-39 Weeks	122	53	50	225
39-52	85	47	39	171
Greater than 52 weeks	269	31	49	349
Overall Totals	716	230	190	1136

The referral rates, and waiting times, for the Primary Care Child Primary Care Service have increased since the reconfiguration of the Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) and the corresponding introduction of the National Access Policy (NAP) in 2021. Children with autism, whose presentations are less complex under NAP scoring but for whom differential diagnosis is complex are now referred to the Primary Care Child Psychology Service. However, the capacity of the Primary Care Child Psychology Service in CH CDLMS has not increased to meet this additional demand

Currently, there are 716 children waiting for Psychology appointments with Primary Care Psychology Cavan Monaghan, with 269 children waiting over 52 weeks. The longest waiting

time is 130 weeks. The waiting times are being impacted staff vacancies (3 posts) which are under recruitment and an increased referral rate. On average, the service receives over 40 referrals for children every month. This referral rate has increased by almost 50% for the same time period (January – May) 2021.

Currently there are 230 children on the waiting list for Primary Care Psychology Services in Donegal. The referral rates and waiting times, for the Donegal Primary Care Psychology Service have increased since the reconfiguration of CDNTs and the implementation of the National Access Policy in Donegal, in July 2021. Prior to this, all children with autism, or a possible diagnosis of autism, were referred to the Disability Services. The Donegal Psychology team have managed the additional demand as efficiently and effectively as possible. New pathways of care have been introduced in order to comprehensively meet the needs of this particular group of children and evidence based approaches are also employed.

Currently, there are 190 children on the waiting list for Primary Care Psychology Services in the Sligo/Leitrim/ South Donegal area. Approximately 30% of these children have been offered best practice group based psychological intervention and will require additional individual intervention in due course. The longest waiting time for an individual appointment is 98 weeks.

I trust this information is of assistance to you but should you have any further queries please contact me.

Yours sincerely



Mandy Doyle
Ceannasaí Seirbhíse, Cúram Príomhúil
Cúram Sláinte Pobail Cabhán Dún na nGall Liatroim Muineachán Sligeach

Head of Service, Primary Care
Community Healthcare Cavan Donegal Leitrim Monaghan Sligo