



Oifig um Cheannasáí Seirbhíse do Chúram Príomhúil
Cúram Sláinte Phobail FSS an Mheán Iarthair
Ascaill Bhaile Choimín,
Páirc Gnó an Ráithín, Ráithín
Luimneach
Teil: 061 483722

Office of the Head of Service for Primary Care
HSE Mid West Community Healthcare
Ballycummin Ave, Raheen Business Park, Raheen,
Limerick
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14th April 2023

Deputy Niall Collins
Red House Hill
Patrickswell
Co. Limerick
V94 KWN6

Re: PQ 14809/23 - "To ask the Minister for Health what measures are in place to reduce audiology lists in Limerick for those under the age of 4 years and those over the age of 4 years; and if he will make a statement on the matter."

Dear Deputy Collins,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in regard to your parliamentary question which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

I can advise that all referrals received by the HSE Audiology Services are reviewed and patients/clients are prioritised/classified into the following categories based on the information contained in the referral and in line with the national guidelines for HSE Audiology Services:

- Priority 1 (P1) Classification – initial appointment for assessment to be offered within four weeks of receipt of referral;
- Priority 2 (P2) Classification – initial appointment for assessment to be offered within four weeks of receipt of referral;
- Routine – patients who do not meet the criteria for urgent classification (P1 or P2) are placed on the routine referral list. These patients are placed chronologically on this waiting list.

A validation exercise was undertaken across the HSE Mid West (CHO3) area for HSE Audiology Services. Patients (or their parents/guardians for children) were contacted by letter to ascertain if they still required assessment by the HSE Audiology Services. If the patient (or their parent/guardian) wished to remain on the waiting list, they were requested to revert to the service to confirm same. Patients (or guardians) who did not revert to advise they wished to remain on the list were removed from the relevant waiting lists. This exercise has resulted in a reduction in waiting times for patients across the CHO3 area.

A further validation exercise is underway in relation to 'review cases'. Patients who have been on the waiting list for over twelve months will be contacted by letter and advised to contact the Audiology service if follow up is required.

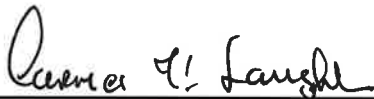
A review of the waiting times for Audiology Services across the CHO3 area highlighted that the longest wait time for children under four was in Limerick. A targeted plan to reduce the waiting time for the children in this cohort will commence in May 2023 and will address the wait times being experienced by these children.

I can also advise that an additional 0.5 WTE Senior Audiologist has been allocated for one year to assist with the waiting lists. Approval has also been received for an additional 1 WTE Basic Grade Audiologist. This additional resource will enhance the provision of the service across the CHO3 area and result in an improvement in waiting times for all patients concerned.

The Primary Care Unit Manager continuously monitors the KPI data returns for the HSE Audiology Services across the CHO3 area which, includes information regarding waiting lists/waiting times. The Primary Care Unit Manager meets with the Audiology team on a regular basis to review the waiting lists and she works with the team to address any issues/risks that arise. They also link with the National Clinical Lead for Audiology to ensure that appropriate plans are in place.

I trust this information addresses the issues raised in your representation.

Yours sincerely,



Carmel McLaughlin
General Manager
Primary Care