



Eagraíocht Cúram  
Sláinte Pobail  
Tuaisceart Chathair &  
Tuaisceart Chontae  
Baile Átha Cliath

Community Healthcare  
Organisation  
Dublin North City &  
County

Ceannasaí Seirbhíse Cúram Príomhúil,  
Eagraíocht Cúram Sláinte Pobail  
Tuaisceart Chathair & Tuaisceart Chontae  
Baile Átha Cliath,  
Saoráid Cúram Sláinte Bhaile Munna,  
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Head of Service Primary Care,  
HSE Community Healthcare Organisation  
Dublin North City & County,  
Ballymun Healthcare Facility,  
Ballymun, Dublin 9, DO9 C8P5.

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

14<sup>th</sup> June 2023

**PQ 26321/23** – “*To ask the Minister for Health the number of children awaiting their clinical psychology appointment through primary care in 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 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.

There are 2,443 children waiting for a Primary Care Psychology appointment in Community Healthcare Organisation Dublin North City and County (CHO DNCC).

The demand for Primary Care Psychology services in CHO DNCC has grown 40% since 2019, as a result of increasing need at community level and changes to the threshold to access supports in secondary care and specialised paediatric services. We have streamlined our Primary Care Psychology services over the past years as well as moving to offering hybrid attendance models to improve accessibility to core services. A service improvement initiative has been established including staff recruitment and retention initiatives aimed at improving access to services for children waiting longer than 52 weeks. This has contributed to 1,363 children being moved off the waiting list in 2022. It is estimated 1,000 additional children will be seen in 2023.

Psychology advice clinics providing immediate support to children and families waiting for the service have been established with nine running per fortnight across the CHO. Low intensity interventions, such as parent information workshops are also offered to support children waiting for individual appointments or with non-complex needs. I have attached a flyer for these clinics for your convenience.

There are currently 36.1 Whole Time Equivalent (WTE) approved psychology posts in Community Healthcare Organisation Dublin North City and County (CHO DNCC) Primary Care. At present, 5 WTE of this total are vacant and going through the process of recruitment. All vacancies are filled in line with the Commission for Public Service Appointments (CPSA) recruitment license. CHO DNCC runs local recruitment initiatives to supplement unsuccessful national recruitment campaigns; for example, CHO DNCC conducted a bespoke interview campaign for unfilled staff grade posts the week commencing 15 May 2023. Any remaining vacancies are directed to agency recruitment using the national agency recruitment framework.

The Psychology team see approximately 161 patients per week for a variety of psychological services (e.g. consultation, assessment, intervention).

CHO DNCC also coordinates the funding of 45 trainee psychologist roles each year through Trinity College Dublin and 5 trainee psychologist roles through UCD to help meet demand for qualified psychologist posts. CHO DNCC plans to increase sponsorships by 15 over the next three years to increase supply, as part of a coordinated effort with the nine HSE CHOs across the country to increase the total number of trainees by 135 over the next three years.

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,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'T. O'Brien', written in dark ink.

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**Tom O'Brien**  
**Head of Service Primary Care**