



Office of the Head of Primary Care  
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11<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Mr. Paul Kehoe TD  
Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2

**PQ 37643/23**

**To ask the Minister for Health what measures are being taken to increase the numbers of children receiving diagnostic assessments from the primary care autism assessment team in Wexford (currently assessing 10-12 children per month-the implication of this volume of assessments is that other children are having to wait as long as 24 months to even commence their assessments) and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Kehoe,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which was submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

*I have examined the matter and the following response outlines the current position.*

As outlined in PQ 26768/23 dated 9th June 2023, the Primary Care Autism Assessment Team (PCAAT) is a multi-disciplinary team consisting of Psychology, Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy. All referrals to the PCAAT are acknowledged to the referral source and family confirming acceptance of the referral to the team.

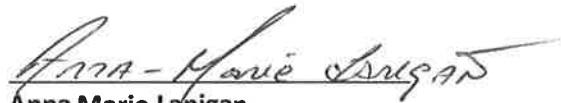
A number of actions are on-going to approve the assessment waiting time for autism on PCAAT for the Waterford/Wexford area. These include:

- the progression of the recruitment of a full-time Psychology Assistant to the team. This person, if recruited, will increase the efficiencies of the service;
- the team are developing protocols to assess children, again increasing the efficiencies for each assessment;
- there are on-going discussions, at a regional level, to increase the staffing resource for autism related services.

However, it is important to note that the rate of referral far exceeds the rate at which the current team can assess children. As such, unfortunately, a reduction in waiting times is not envisaged in the short term.

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

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anna-Marie Lanigan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

**Anna Marie Lanigan**

**Head of Service-Primary Care/Assistant National Director  
South East Community Healthcare**