



Oifig an Stiúirthóra Náisiúnta Cúnta  
Oibríochtaí Meabhairshláinte

Ospidéal Naomh Lómáin, Baile Phámar,  
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Deputy Jim O'Callaghan  
Dail Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

1<sup>st</sup> May 2024

**PQ Number: 14471/24**

**PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health the number of people in each LHO area waiting for a counselling appointment in primary care as of 1 April 2024 or the latest date available; and the number waiting less than 6, 6-12, 12-18 and more than 18 months. -Jim O'Callaghan**

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Dear Deputy O'Callaghan

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.

The HSE National Counselling Service established Counselling in Primary Care (CIPC) service in July 2013 as a mental health initiative to provide counselling to adults experiencing mild to moderate psychological difficulties who present in the primary care setting. CIPC receives an average of 17,000 referrals per annum. More than 170,000 people have been referred to CIPC since it was established with an average of 2,060 clients attending at any time.

All adults in receipt of a medical card are currently eligible for the service. Access is by referral from the client's GP or a member of the Primary Care Team. CIPC is available in each community health area and is accessible from over 240 locations, mainly primary care centres, situated throughout Ireland.

Waiting times for CIPC vary across the country depending on referral rates, service delivery model, staffing levels and individual geographic factors. CIPC is a demand led service with the counselling contract offered based on the assessed needs of the client. As the number of clients seeking counselling exceeds the number of counselling spaces available at any one time there is a waiting time for counselling.

The table below indicates the latest available information for the number of people waiting for the HSE NCS Counselling in Primary Care Service. Figures are provided by CHO, LHO and length of time waiting for the time periods less than one month, one to 3 months, 4 to six months and more than 6 months. A breakdown of waiting list information for 6-12, 12-18 and more than 18 months is not available.



Of the total number of people waiting (4939), the majority (51%) are waiting 3 months or less for counselling. 16% of people currently on the waiting list have been waiting longer than 6 months.

CIPC Waiting List 31.3.24		Total < 1 mth	Total >1 < 3 mths	Total >3 < 6 mths	Total > 6 mths	Total Waiting 31.3.24
CHO 1	Cavan Monaghan	13	41	52	42	
CHO 1	Donegal	6	83	50	24	
CHO 1	Sligo Leitrim	15	32	38	32	
<b>CHO 1</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>438</b>
CHO 2	Galway	9	38	112	88	
CHO 2	Mayo	5	17	30	49	
CHO 2	Roscommon	3	12	20	17	
<b>CHO 2</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>399</b>
CHO 3	Clare	6	31	17	19	
CHO 3	Limerick	17	104	92	39	
CHO 3	North Tipperary East Limerick	13	53	25	47	
<b>CHO 3</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>460</b>
CHO 4	Kerry	16	71	29	7	
CHO 4	North Cork	5	30	40	9	
CHO 4	North Lee	18	92	104	26	
CHO 4	South Lee	21	105	25	4	
CHO 4	West Cork	4	20	11	2	
<b>CHO 4</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>639</b>
CHO 5	Carlow Kilkenny	12	42	83	20	
CHO 5	South Tipperary	4	33	47	11	
CHO 5	Waterford	19	66	76	51	
CHO 5	Wexford	5	36	42	24	
<b>CHO 5</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>571</b>
CHO 6	Dublin South East	22	51	62	17	
CHO 6	Dun Laoghaire	10	37	33	3	
CHO 6	Wicklow	29	71	84	29	
<b>CHO 6</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>448</b>
CHO 7	Dublin South City	22	25	1	0	
CHO 7	Dublin South West	33	38	0	0	
CHO 7	Dublin West	28	52	0	0	
CHO 7	Kildare West Wicklow	46	56	0	0	
<b>CHO 7</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>301</b>
CHO 8	Laois Offaly	43	120	93	38	
CHO 8	Longford Westmeath	33	103	93	69	
CHO 8	Louth	24	85	81	39	
CHO 8	Meath	17	91	96	88	
<b>CHO 8</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>1113</b>
CHO 9	Dublin North	50	136	59	6	
CHO 9	Dublin North Central	40	86	55	2	
CHO 9	Dublin North West	20	61	48	3	
<b>CHO 9</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>566</b>
<b>National Total</b>		<b>608</b>	<b>1918</b>	<b>1608</b>	<b>805</b>	<b>4939</b>



I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Mc Cusker'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'T' and 'M'.

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**Tony Mc Cusker**  
**General Manager**  
**National Mental Health Services**