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3rd July 2024

Deputy Violet-Anne Wynne
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2.

PQ 17223/24 – To ask the Minister for Health to provide an update on the waiting lists for adult assessments, such as ASD and ADHD, in the public health system; and if he will make a statement on the matter

- Deputy Violet-Anne Wynne

Dear Deputy Wynne,

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

Mental Health National Clinical Programme - ADHD in Adults

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterised by inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Once viewed as a childhood disorder, it is now widely accepted that ADHD persists into adulthood in a proportion of individuals. ADHD can cause many issues in areas such as personal and social relations, education and occupation, managing money and organising life in general. There is also an increased risk of having other mental health difficulties with it such as anxiety and depression.

The National Clinical Programme for Adults with ADHD was launched in January 2021. Prior to the inception of the Programme, there were no specific ADHD public services available for Adults in Ireland. The NCP for ADHD is delivered as part of the HSE's mental health service provision to ensure an integrated, person-centred response to adults with ADHD. The Programme includes both assessment and treatment of the disorder and works collaboratively with voluntary agencies. It envisages a national service of ADHD teams, with each Team comprised of a Consultant Psychiatrist, Senior Psychologist, Senior Occupational Therapist, Clinical Nurse Specialist Mental Health, and an administrator. When fully implemented, 11 Adult ADHD Clinics will be established to provide assessment and multi-modal treatment in the CHO's in line with the Model of Care.

The table below provides detail on the location of each of the specialist Adult ADHD teams.

ADHD NCP	
CHO1	Sligo / Leitrim / Donegal
CHO3	Limerick / Clare /North Tipperary
CHO4 Cork	Cork
CHO4 Kerry/West Cork	Kerry / West Cork
CHO6	South Dublin / Wicklow
CHO7	CHO7 partly opened in November 2023

In December 2023, the National Clinical Lead for Adults with ADHD collated data from the 5 fully operational teams on the waiting lists in each service. This is shown in the table below.

Team	Staffing			Clinical Capacity	Referrals accepted YTD	Referrals assessed YTD	Number waiting	Estimated Waiting Time
	Admin	Clinical WTE	WTE Approved					
CHO1 Sligo/Leitrim/Donegal 1	1	1.5	2.5	60%	197	87	336	2 years
CHO6 Dublin SE/ Wicklow NS	1	3	4	75%	448	143	470	3.5 - 4 years
CHO3 Limerick/Clare/ N. Tipperary	1	2	5	40%	123	128	147	1.5 years
CHO4 Kerry/West Cork 1	0.5	1.5	2.5	60%	293	184	149	1 year
CHO4 Cork City/ 2 NE Cork	1	3	4	75%	270	124	146	1 year

In response to the growing waiting list, the National Clinical Lead established a joint project on Integrated Care for Adults with ADHD with ADHD Ireland to develop a Primary Care response. This will report in Q1 2025.

In addition, as part of the National Clinical Programme, funding was provided to facilitate a collaboration with ADHD Ireland and the UCD School of Psychology to develop an Adult ADHD App and the UMAAP Programme (Understanding and Managing Adult ADHD Programme).

UMAAP is a 6-week online intervention that combines psychoeducation, with acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) to provide a self-help intervention for adults who have ADHD. Both of the above are available to everybody in Ireland. The former can be downloaded from the App Store and the latter via ADHD Ireland. These should ensure those with milder ADHD can have access to appropriate information including self-care information. This is an alternative to referral to the specific Adult ADHD Services the focus of which is on those with moderate to severe ADHD and should reduce demand on these Services. UMAAP is delivered through ADHD Ireland and has now been allocated recurrent annual funding by Minister Butler.

Both the ADHD App and the UMAAP Programme have proven to be very positive resources for Adults with ADHD.

Further information can be found at the following links:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/cspd/ncps/mental-health/adhd/>

<https://adult.adhdirl.ie/download>

<https://adhdireland.ie/>

<https://adhdireland.ie/for-adults/>

Disability services are provided based on the presenting needs of an individual rather than by the diagnosis of the individual or the actual type of disability or service required. Services are provided following individual assessment according to the person's individual requirements and care needs. Services provided are tailored to the individual needs and requirements of the child/adult with ASD.

With regard to adults, based on presentation to the GP, individuals can be referred on to services in Primary Care or the Multidisciplinary Adult Disability Team.


In addition, many individuals with autism, due to the complexity of their presentation, may have a primary diagnosis of intellectual disability or a co-morbid mental health component.

An extremely wide range of individual differences is represented within the Autistic Spectrum Disorder categorization, from individuals who also have a severe learning disability to those with average and above average intelligence. All share the triad of difficulties in reciprocal social interaction, communication, and a lack of flexible thinking. ASDs impact on all areas of functioning and have enormous implications throughout the lives of those affected across the entire ability range.

The HSE does not routinely collate data regarding adults' waiting lists for an ASD assessment. As outlined above, Disability services are provided based on the presenting needs of an individual rather than by the diagnosis of the individual or the actual type of disability or service required.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,



David Walsh
National Director
Access and Integration