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19th September 2024

Ms. Jennifer Murnane O'Connor TD
Dail Eireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ 34331/24

To ask the Minister for Health the number of persons on a waiting list for primary care services and CDNT in Carlow; the number of staff available in both; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Murnane O'Connor,

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 reviewed the matter and the following is the current position.

Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT) – Network 1 Carlow

Following reconfiguration of children's services under the national framework for progressing services for children and young people, a cohort of children were assigned as appropriate to the relevant care group based on their identified needs at that time.

The CDNTs operate in an Inter-Disciplinary model of working across all disciplines. Since reconfiguration children are referred to the CDNT, referral information is then reviewed by clinical staff on the CDNT. If a child is accepted to the CDNT, their needs are identified from information provided. While the CDNT works as inter-Disciplinary model of care, children are then from the New Referrals Meeting pathwayed for services/supports based on the needs identified. These pathways could have a variety of clinicians from a number of disciplines that would offer services to the child. At times a child may present with a very specific need that requires input from one specific discipline e.g. a requirement for an AAC device will be supported by a SLT.

If a child is identified to have specific needs at the point of referral or while engaging with CDNT services at a later date, the appropriate clinicians on the CDNT would meet and review all information

available and then prioritise the child into three categories i.e. Priority 1, Priority 2 or Priority 3 category. For Priority 1 categories, those children would receive their service input as soon as possible, depending on the risk and need presenting this could happen within days. For those children that are at a lower priority rating may have a longer waiting period. The CDNTs are developing support clinics/workshops that would provide information/support such as benefits/entitlements, parenting programmes such as Parents Plus Special Needs, Early Bird.

It is difficult to give general information on wait times as it is based on each individual child and needs and risk present.

The following table sets out the number of staff currently available on CDNT – Network 1 Carlow:

Title	WTE
Administration	1.80
CDNM	1.00
Senior Dietician	1.00
Nursing	1.00
Senior Physiotherapist	2.00
Senior Speech & Language Therapist	1.71
Social Worker (Basic)	1.00
Senior Social Worker	1.00
Total	10.51 WTE

As with other areas Disability Services within South East Community Healthcare (SECH) are continuing to experience significant recruitment challenges. The HSE is operating in a very competitive market as there are significant shortages of qualified healthcare professionals nationally and internationally. South East Community Healthcare continues to prioritise local competitions for all disciplines and continues to express posts out to current national panels where relevant.

The HSE acknowledges that waiting times for CDNT service at this time are stressful for children and their families, and will continue to explore a range of options to enhance the recruitment and retention of essential staff into our CDNTs.

My colleagues in Primary Care have provided the following information.

Table outlining the current position for Primary Care Services.

Community Healthcare Network (Primary Care) - Carlow as at 31.07.24				
Waiting Lists	Physio	OT	SLT	Dietetics
Adults				
Waiting 0-12 weeks	318	84	15	48
Waiting 12-26 weeks	185	101	13	49
Waiting 26-39 weeks	182	75	14	8
Waiting 39-52 weeks	188	30	32	17
Waiting <52 weeks	282	9	30	23
Paediatrics				
Waiting 0-12 weeks	30	41	30	27
Waiting 12-26 weeks	27	31	28	29
Waiting 26-39 weeks	16	48	45	12
Waiting 39-52 weeks	21	34	84	10
Waiting <52 weeks	15	170	99	39
Total waiting <52 weeks	967	444	261	200
Total Waiting >52 weeks	297	179	129	62
% seen <52 weeks wait	69.3%	59.7%	50.6%	69.0%
Staffing				
	Physio	OT	SIT	Dietetics
Total Approved WEE	9	10	7.9	2
Total Actual WTE	4	3.6	2.9	0.5
Total Actual Paediatrics	1.5	1.6	2.4	0

Yours sincerely,



Ms. Paula Dwan
General Manager for Children's Disability Services
South East Community Healthcare