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Oifig an Stiúrthóir Náisiúnta Cúnta
Rochtain agus Comhtháthú: Seirbhísí
Meabhairshláinte FSS
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Deputy Padraig Rice
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

19th August 2025

PQ Number: 42699/25

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health the average wait time for referrals for counselling services, by regional health area and integrated healthcare area, in tabular form. -Pádraig Rice

Dear Deputy Rice,

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 (NCS) is a professional, confidential, counselling and psychotherapy service available free of charge in all regions of the country.

Since 2000 the NCS has provided counselling for adults who have experienced childhood abuse (CAPA). This service offers medium to long term counselling contracts.

In 2013 the NCS expanded to provide the CIPC service to adults who hold a GMS card who may be experiencing mild to moderate psychological difficulties. CIPC is available in each HSE regional health area and provides up to eight counselling sessions

Since 2021 the National Counselling Service has provided counselling to former residents of Mother and Baby Home and County Home Institutions as part of the Government agreed package of health and well-being measures. There is no waiting list for this service.

Tables 1 & 2 below indicate the latest available information for the number of people waiting for counselling and average waiting times with the HSE NCS CIPC and CAPA services as at **30.6.2025**. Figures are provided by Health Region, LHO, and length of time waiting.



Table 1: Number waiting for counselling with CIPC/Average Waiting Time by Area at 30.06.2025

HSERegion - CIPC Service Number Waiting and Average Waiting Time	LHO Area	Less than 1 Mth	>1<3 Mths	3-6 Mths	6 Mths +	Total no. Waiting	Average Wait time* (Months)
HSE Dublin & Midlands	Dublin South City	20	14	0	0	34	1.12
HSE Dublin & Midlands	Dublin South West	22	26	0	0	48	1.31
HSE Dublin & Midlands	Dublin West	31	45	13	0	89	1.84
HSE Dublin & Midlands	Kildare West Wicklow	36	18	0	0	54	1
HSE Dublin & Midlands	Laois Offaly	47	129	61	29	266	2.91
HSE Dublin & Midlands	Longford Westmeath	29	95	88	43	255	3.62
HSE Dublin & Midlands	Total	185	327	162	72	746	2.7
HSE Dublin & North East	Cavan Monaghan	11	26	24	14	75	3.61
HSE Dublin & North East	Dublin North	55	99	59	0	213	2.3
HSE Dublin & North East	Dublin North Central	34	77	129	19	259	3.45
HSE Dublin & North East	Dublin North West	22	65	97	4	188	3.23
HSE Dublin & North East	Louth	24	62	42	2	130	2.62
HSE Dublin & North East	Meath	22	62	118	74	276	4.43
HSE Dublin & North East	Total	168	391	469	113	1141	3.35
HSE Dublin & South East	Carlow Kilkenny	7	45	82	22	156	4.02
HSE Dublin & South East	Dublin South East	17	33	50	70	170	4.85
HSE Dublin & South East	Dun Laoghaire	19	40	72	151	282	5.48
HSE Dublin & South East	South Tipperary	7	33	24	19	83	3.86
HSE Dublin & South East	Waterford	21	60	80	10	171	3.31
HSE Dublin & South East	Wexford	10	41	54	19	124	3.81
HSE Dublin & South East	Wicklow	17	32	76	103	228	5.21
HSE Dublin & South East	Total	98	284	438	394	1214	4.57
HSE Mid West	Clare	4	36	75	83	198	5.22
HSE Mid West	Limerick	19	104	116	38	277	3.7
HSE Mid West	North Tipperary East Limerick	8	28	39	77	152	5.35
HSE Mid West	Total	31	168	230	198	627	4.58
HSE South West	Kerry	21	41	20	5	87	2.53
HSE South West	North Cork	11	18	13	2	44	2.61
HSE South West	North Lee	30	70	58	14	172	3.03
HSE South West	South Lee	26	68	45	15	154	3.01
HSE South West	West Cork	7	14	9	2	32	2.72
HSE South West	Total	95	211	145	38	489	2.88
HSE West & North West	Donegal	35	63	54	22	174	3.17
HSE West & North West	Galway	46	73	33	98	250	4.21
HSE West & North West	Mayo	18	20	2	14	54	3.02
HSE West & North West	Roscommon	8	8	3	8	27	3.46
HSE West & North West	Sligo Leitrim	31	35	53	64	183	4.39
HSE West & North West	Total	138	199	145	206	688	3.87
National Total		715	1580	1589	1021	4905	3.62

*Average waiting time calculated by dividing the average waiting time for the number of people in each waiting category by the total number of people waiting.



Table 2: Number waiting for counselling with CAPA/Average Waiting Time by Area at 30.06.2025

HSE NCS CAPA Number Waiting at 30.6.25	LHO	Less than 1 Mth	>1<3 Mths	3-6 Mths	6 Mths +	Total	*Average Wait (months)
HSE Dublin & Midlands	Dublin South City	3	13	3	1	20	2.5
HSE Dublin & Midlands	Dublin South West	3	10	13	1	27	3.3
HSE Dublin & Midlands	Dublin West	7	11	14	0	32	2.77
HSE Dublin & Midlands	Kildare West Wicklow	4	20	4	0	28	2.14
HSE Dublin & Midlands	Laois Offaly	4	28	20	24	76	4.79
HSE Dublin & Midlands	Longford Westmeath	2	8	11	45	66	7.14
HSE Dublin & Midlands	Total	23	90	65	71	249	4.51
HSE Dublin & North East	Cavan Monaghan	4	2	3	2	11	3.41
HSE Dublin & North East	Dublin North	4	13	19	55	91	6.69
HSE Dublin & North East	Dublin North Central	5	12	19	75	111	7.09
HSE Dublin & North East	Dublin North West	4	6	13	40	63	6.86
HSE Dublin & North East	Louth	5	12	23	11	51	4.49
HSE Dublin & North East	Meath	6	8	19	14	47	4.91
HSE Dublin & North East	Total	28	53	96	197	374	6.22
HSE Dublin & South East	Carlow Kilkenny	0	3	1	0	4	2.63
HSE Dublin & South East	Dublin South East	6	9	13	17	45	5.17
HSE Dublin & South East	Dun Laoghaire	5	9	14	28	56	6
HSE Dublin & South East	South Tipperary	1	0	1	0	2	2.5
HSE Dublin & South East	Waterford	0	0	0	1	1	9
HSE Dublin & South East	Wexford	2	2	0	0	4	1.25
HSE Dublin & South East	Wicklow	6	18	24	16	64	4.55
HSE Dublin & South East	Total	20	41	53	62	176	5.05
HSE Mid West	Clare	1	3	1	0	5	2.2
HSE Mid West	Limerick	3	1	6	1	11	3.59
HSE Mid West	North Tipperary East Limerick	0	0	0	4	4	9
HSE Mid West	Total	4	4	7	5	20	4.33
HSE South West	Kerry	4	18	13	7	42	3.8
HSE South West	North Cork	0	1	1	4	6	7.08
HSE South West	North Lee	6	12	14	28	60	5.7
HSE South West	South Lee	5	20	13	47	85	6.16
HSE South West	West Cork	0	3	1	1	5	3.9
HSE South West	Total	15	54	43	87	199	5.49
HSE West & North West	Donegal	1	5	4	0	10	2.85
HSE West & North West	Galway	10	24	12	84	130	6.64
HSE West & North West	Mayo	6	2	1	4	13	3.65
HSE West & North West	Roscommon	2	0	2	6	10	6.4
HSE West & North West	Sligo Leitrim	19	18	20	15	72	3.76
HSE West & North West	Total	38	49	39	109	235	5.42
National Total		128	291	303	531	1253	5.42

*Average waiting time calculated by dividing the average waiting time for the number of people in each waiting category by the total number of people waiting.

Waiting times for counselling vary across HSE Health Regions depending on factors such as level of demand, staffing levels, availability of accommodation etc.. The NCS 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.

Of the total number of people waiting for counselling with the NCS at the end of June 2025 (6,158) 44% were waiting 3 months or less for counselling, 25% were waiting longer than 6 months. The average waiting time nationally for counselling with the CIPC service is currently 3.62 months with an average wait of 5.4 months to access counselling for adults who have experienced childhood abuse.

The number of clients currently waiting is in the context of a year on year increase in referrals to, and demand for counselling with the NCS - This is combined with a significant number of vacant Counsellor/Therapist posts which is negatively impacting waiting times for counselling.



I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours Sincerely,

Tony McCusker
General Manager
Access and Integration; HSE Mental Health Services