



Deputy Roderic O’Gorman.
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

30th June 2025

PQ Number: 29698/25

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health the average length of time a person has to wait before gaining access to dialectical behaviour therapy within the HSE, by county; and if she will make a statement on the matter. -Roderic O’Gorman

Dear Deputy O’Gorman,

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.

Historically, many DBT teams held DBT long waiting lists but feedback from multiple stakeholders in their areas, as well as international best practice guidelines, identified that this was not optimal, effective or in line with best practice. In view of this, most DBT teams in the HSE now do not hold waiting lists.

However, this does not indicate that clinical demand for DBT is currently being met in these areas. Individuals continue to actively engage in treatment as usual with their core community mental health team (CMHT) until a place comes available in the specialist intervention (DBT). CMHTs will continue to prioritise access to the evidence based intervention based on clinical need. There is agreement among stakeholders that demand for DBT is significantly greater than current availability. The need for DBT is also evidenced by the NSRF registry data.

There are 32 teams offering comprehensive DBT in Ireland and the majority of those teams do not hold waiting lists.

The following teams hold waiting lists:

- East Galway Adult Mental Health: 6 people on waiting list (on 31.12.2024)
- South Kerry Adult Mental Health – 6 people on list (on 31.12.2024)
- Waterford Adult Mental Health – 7 people on waiting list (on 31.12.2024)
- Lucena CAMHS- 4 on waiting list (on 31.12.2024)
- Kildare Midwest/South/Mideast 12 on waiting list (06.2025). Longest person waiting 2 years (team currently paused due to staff shortages).
- North Kildare: 2 people on waiting list (06.2025). Average waiting time 6-12 months.
- Louth CAMHS – holds a waiting list 0 on it (on 31.12.2024)



In approximately 50% of Ireland, DBT is not currently available. Supporting staff to set up DBT teams in these areas remain an urgent priority for the National HSE DBT training team. The goal of the training team is to get to 100% national coverage. The HSE, in supporting the development of the National HSE DBT training team, has provided a resource to work towards the goal of 100% coverage.

Since 2021, the National HSE DBT training team have worked in partnership with mental health management in each region to implement governance structures to support DBT implementation. The DBT Co-ordinators group has met quarterly since 2021 to oversee DBT implementation, and has at least one DBT co-ordinator per region.

Staff from National HSE DBT training team are available to provide DBT training and supervision, as well as implementation and research support to staff identified for training in each region.

Unfortunately, in several areas of the country, there are significant gaps in core MDT staffing. Challenges with recruitment and retention of staff in mental health services across the HSE (including DBT provision) has limited service continuity in many areas.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours Sincerely,

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