

**Príomhoifigeach Daoine**

Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhísí  
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Liam Quaide, TD

25 July 2025

**PQ 34665/25 (Health): To ask the Minister for Health her recruitment plans to address the waiting-list crisis in child and adolescent primary care psychology services; and if she will make a statement on the matter.**  
- Liam Quaide

Dear Deputy,

I refer to your recent Parliamentary Question which was sent to the HSE for response.

I can confirm Waiting list data is not collated centrally, however, I did reach out to each of the Regional Executive Offices. Please refer to appendices below with responses issued to our office from all six HSE regions.

I trust this is of some assistance.

Yours sincerely,

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Mairéad Ryan  
National HR

## Appendix 1.

The **HSE Southwest** are fully committed to reducing waiting times and improving access to psychological therapies in both Primary Care and the wider health care system. The following are key initiatives that he and the IHA Managers are supporting that will help drive this change:

- Establishment of a Regional Director of Psychology post with a key role in strategically planning psychology services for the region. The initial focus will be on managing Primary Care waiting lists.
- A commitment to fill **all** current vacant approved Psychology posts at Psychology Assistant, Staff and Senior grades. These are currently being expressed to national panels, and in cases where these are unable to fill local supplementary panels, are being established to enhance recruitment.
- All existing HSE Southwest-funded trainees for 2025 have been offered a permanent contract starting in September. Several of these posts are vacant PC posts that were unable to fill via national panels.
- The HSE Southwest Executive Management team has continually supported the expansion of the training partnerships in the region, increasing the number of funded training places across both UCC and MIC to build a future workforce supply chain. In 2025, there will be 16 funded training places in partnership with UCC and 2 places in partnership with MIC. This is **more than double the number of training places** since the first eight graduates exited the training scheme in UCC in 2019.
- There will be a significant increase in the number of professionally trained psychologists (Clinical and Educational Psychology Doctorates) annually from 2026.

Year	UCC/HSE Graduates	MIC/HSE Graduates	Total Graduates
2026	14	2	16
2027	12	2	14
2028	16	2	18
2026-2028	42	6	48

- All graduates will be encouraged and expected to honour payback of training in the region, with a targeted approach to staff being appointed to posts in areas of greatest need, such as Primary Care.
- There is a commitment from the Regional Director of Psychology and the Regional Director of People (with support of the wider Senior Executive Management team) to develop a Regional Psychological Service Workforce plan. This will include looking at both recruitment and retention of Psychologists and other Psychotherapists as required to meet the current and future needs of the population in the region.

## Appendix 2.

The **Dublin & South East** referral rates to primary care psychology services have increased in recent years in line with national trends. The HSE is committed to delivering efficient high-quality services to all eligible service users and on improving access to care in order to reduce waiting times for patients. This includes monitoring the waiting list on an on-going basis in the context of available resources. In addition, the HSE continues to address those longest waiters with the current Waiting List Initiative which includes children and young people waiting for > 52 weeks since 2021.

Regrettably there are recruitment challenges in Psychology Services. The HSE is operating in a competitive market and there are significant shortages of qualified Health and Social Care Professionals, including Psychologists, both nationally and internationally. The HSE is committed to progressing the recruitment of posts through the National Recruitment Service for Psychology Grades, through local recruitment campaigns and advertising via universities to graduates of professional psychology programmes.

The HSE acknowledges that waiting times for services 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.

### Appendix 3.

CAMHs in **Dublin and North East** has a total of 14.5 WTE that are being prioritized for recruitment at present.

All approved posts for recruitment are being advanced without delay across every care group and hospital site in the Dublin and North East Region. Deficits in primary care psychology services are currently being advanced at multiple stages of the recruitment process.

### Appendix 4.

Since the introduction of the National Access Policy (NAP) in June 2022, the number and complexity in referrals received by Primary Care Psychology Services in the HSE **Mid West** has increased exponentially between 2020 and 2024.

The number of referrals has increased by 300% - 420 referrals in 2020 to 1,222 referrals in 2024. A number of initiatives have been introduced to support the management of referrals and waiting lists within the service and these have been beneficial in reducing the wait times for patients.

At the end of June 2025, there were approx. 1200 children awaiting an initial assessment by the Primary Care Psychology Services. The service is above the national target in respect of the number of patients seen.

Waiting list validation is ongoing and is resulting in the number of patients waiting over 52 weeks to be called reducing since January 2025. There is ongoing waiting list initiative funding for the HSE Mid West with a commitment to remove 65 children (longest waiters) in 2025 and we are on target to deliver this.

Primary Care Psychology Services is experiencing ongoing challenges in relation to recruiting and retaining clinicians within the service and this is not unique to HSE Mid West. The HSE is committed to progressing the recruitment of posts through local recruitment campaigns and advertising via the Universities to Graduates of Professional Psychology Programmes.

In HSE Mid West, a number of vacant posts have been advertised recently, and the successful candidates are currently undergoing pre-employment vetting.

### Appendix 5.

The **West North West** Priority Recruitment status is defined for all Child and Adolescent Psychology Services posts approved by the REO – posts are expressed to existing panels where possible or new recruitment campaign supported to support the hire/start to such approved posts at earliest possible date.

### Appendix 6.

The **Dublin & Midlands** region is actively recruiting to fill vacant Psychologist and assistant psychologist posts - both permanent staff and agency staff as per the WLAP funding. It should be noted that recruitment and retention for these particular grades remains a challenge. We also continue to validate the waitlists and operate a stepped model of care with offers of group sessions or workshops to parents, along with scheduling individual appointments. Primary Care are also sponsoring an additional 5 WTE trainee psychologists a year from the Trinity College Dublin counselling programme. Trainee Psychologists will be utilised during their placements in line with the college requirements to assist with service user intervention as appropriate.

The region will continue to review service needs and prioritise recruitment in accordance with its Pay and Numbers strategy.