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Mr. Donnchadh Ó Laoghaire, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ ref 13330/25

"To ask the Minister for Health the number of people currently on the waiting list for primary care child and adolescent services in South Lee".

Dear Deputy Ó Laoghaire,

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.

The table below outlines the waiting list numbers for primary care child and adolescent psychology services in South Lee as at the end of March 2025:

Month = End March 2025	Number:
No. of patient referrals	68 new Child Referrals 4 new Adult Referrals
Total no. of patients on the treatment waiting list	Children = 2175 • 198 = 0 - 4 yrs • 1977 = 5 – 17 yrs Adult = 23 • 20 = 18 – 64 yrs • 3 = >65 yrs
No. of patients on the treatment waiting list at the end of the reporting period >52 weeks	Children = 1539 • 77 = 0-4 yrs • 1462 = 5 – 17 yrs Adult = 0 waiting > 52 weeks
No. of patients on the treatment waiting list less than or equal to 12 weeks	Children = 126 • 31 = 0-4 yrs • 95 = 5 – 17 yrs Adult = 11 • 9 = 18 – 64 • 2 = >65 yrs)
No. of patients on the treatment waiting list less than or equal to 52 weeks	Children = 636 • 121 = 0-4 yrs • 515 = 5 – 17 yrs



Adult = 23
• 20 = 18 – 64yrs
• 3 = >65 yrs

Regrettably the area has had ongoing and significant recruitment challenges whereby the vacancy rate has been high from 2018 through 2024. During the HSE recruitment embargo, vacancies in replacement and new development posts were not filled nor was cover achieved for statutory leave.

With the implementation of the Pay and Numbers Strategy 2024, HSE South West has been actively recruiting to fill long-standing psychology vacancies across all areas of Cork and Kerry and a number of posts are at various stages of recruitment, some with commencement dates between January – March 2025.

Having considered the psychology risks for the region, HSE South West has advertised a Director of Psychology to provide adequate governance overall for psychology services in the region. This is to ensure that limited resources can be reviewed and reconfigured based on population needs. Priority will need to be given to critical services such as primary care to help reduce waiting times and bringing the timelines for children awaiting psychological supports within the Sláintecare targets.

Given the backlog and cumulative increase in the rate of referral to Primary Care Services, a significant increase in staffing is required to be in a position to meet these targets. Where psychologists are not in place, a skill mix will be considered which may include professionally trained staff offering a level of therapeutic support to children and families to meet children's needs. Whilst awaiting the Director of Psychology recruitment, senior management locally are presently proactively working with the Psychology Managers in Primary Care and Mental Health Services in the region to optimise access to psychological services as far as possible.

The aim of this is to implement a transformative model which will not only address the timelines associated with psychology services but also identify alternative suitable pathways which can be offered to parents/guardians and children as more timely measures to address some presenting needs whilst they await expert clinical supports, treatment and care.

If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

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