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14th March, 2025

Mr. Thomas Gould., T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ ref 9664/25

"To ask the Minister for Health the number of children currently awaiting a primary care occupational therapy appointment in CH04, by area, in tabular form"

Dear Deputy Gould,

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 Paediatric Occupational Therapy Department helps children and young people aged 0-18 years who are experiencing difficulty in performing the daily activities expected of them. This may include any of the areas of self-care, dressing, toileting, feeding; movement and coordination such as balance skills, ball skills, hand-eye coordination; sensory processing; handwriting and planning and organising skills at home or school. Referrals are accepted from parents, guardians, teachers, or other professionals working with the child.

The below table outlines the current waiting time for a children's occupational therapy primary care appointment.

| Weeks | North Cork | North Lee | South Lee | West Cork | Kerry |
|---------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|
| 0 -12 weeks | 84 | 228 | 230 | 75 | 133 |
| 13 - 26 weeks | 97 | 291 | 322 | 68 | 120 |
| 27 - 39 weeks | 124 | 262 | 247 | 49 | 119 |
| 40 - 52 weeks | 102 | 240 | 226 | 74 | 123 |
| > 52 weeks | 293 | 236 | 367 | 95 | 175 |
| Total | 700 | 1257 | 1392 | 361 | 670 |

I acknowledge that this timeframe for such a service is less than desirable, and I apologise for same. This is as a consequence to a number of factors including a growth in demand for services and also the implications of resource deficit due to the recent recruitment embargo. Efforts to increase resources throughout and reduce waiting times are indeed our top priority. We are actively working on strategies to address resources allocation, validation of waiting lists, streamlining processes and optimising existing workloads, ultimately working towards providing timely access for all to services.

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

Yours sincerely,

Mari O'Donovan
Interim Head of Service - Primary Care,
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