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Oifig an Stiúrthóir Náisiúnta Cúnta
Rochtain agus Comhtháthú: Seirbhísi
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Deputy Sorca Clarke
Dail Eireann
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Date: 30/10/2025

PQ Number: 56272/25

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health to provide current waiting times for counselling services under the HSE and its funded partners, by RHA area, and to indicate the reduction in targets being set for 2026.

Dear Deputy Clarke

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 National Counselling Service

The HSE National Counselling Service (NCS) established in 2020, is a professional, confidential, counselling and psychotherapy service available free of charge in all regions of the country.

The Counselling and Psychotherapy service (CAPA) for adults who have experienced childhood abuse provides counselling and psychotherapy for moderate to severe psychological difficulties and offers medium to long term counselling contracts. Self-referral or referral via a health care professional are available.

In 2023, **2,400** people were referred to CAPA. **2,947** availed of this service which offered **32,428** counselling sessions that year.

In 2024, **2,771** people were referred to CAPA. **3,291** clients availed of the service which offered a total of **35,919** counselling sessions that year.

Between 2023 and 2024 there was a 15% increase in referrals to CAPA. 10% more sessions were offered to clients, and 11% more clients accessed the CAPA service in 2024 than in 2023.

The HSE's NCS provides the **Counselling in Primary Care (CIPC)** service, which was established in 2013. It provides counselling to adults who hold a GMS card who are experiencing mild to moderate psychological difficulties. The CIPC model of service is aimed at providing early access to counselling. Clients are offered up to eight counselling sessions. Referral to CIPC is a written referral from the person's GP or member of their Primary Care Team.



In 2023, **19,448** people were referred to CIPC. **10,822** clients availed of this service which offered **70,713** counselling sessions that year.

In 2024 **20, 619** people were referred to CIPC. **11,730** clients availed of the service which provided **75,894** counselling sessions that year.

In 2024 there was a 6% increase in referrals to CIPC. CIPC offered 7% more counselling sessions than had been provided in 2023. The service was accessed by an additional 8% of people in 2024.

Current waiting times for the NCS

Waiting times for the NCS/CiPC vary across HSE Health Regions depending on; level of demand, staffing levels, service delivery model and location. 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.

National Counselling Service – CAPA. On 30.9.25 there were 1,315 people waiting nationally for CAPA, of whom 59% were waiting less than 6 months. See Table 1 below for breakdown by RHA.

Table 1: Waiting times for HSE NCS CAPA service

HSE Regional Health Area CIPC Waiting times (30.9.2025)	<1 mth	>1 <3 Mths	>3 <6 Mths	6Mths+	Total
HSE Dublin & Midlands	36	96	82	72	286
HSE Dublin & North East	22	65	86	198	371
HSE Dublin & South East	13	24	56	87	180
HSE Mid West	2	7	3	3	15
HSE South West	14	33	55	78	180
HSE West & North West	25	95	63	100	283
National Total	112	320	345	538	1315



National Counselling Service - CIPC 4,876 people were waiting for CIPC at the end of September 2025, of whom 49% were waiting 3 months or less. See Table 2 below for breakdown by RHA.

Table 2: Waiting times for HSE NCS CIPC service

HSE Regional Health Area CIPC Waiting times (30.9.2025)	<1 mth	>1 <3 Mths	>3 <6 Mths	6Mths+	Total
HSE Dublin & Midlands	168	302	81	50	601
HSE Dublin & North East	184	508	477	169	1338
HSE Dublin & South East	63	255	351	388	1057
HSE Mid West	87	167	185	174	613
HSE South West	134	240	184	53	611
HSE West & North West	104	185	196	171	656
National Total	740	1657	1474	1005	4876

A waiting list initiative for the NCS intends to reduce the numbers waiting by 1,776 people.

Community and Voluntary sector organisations funded by the HSE

The HSE provides funding to community sector organisations for the provision of counselling to children, young people and adults. Services are online and/or face-to-face. Most of these organisations have no or very short waiting times, due to the flexibility of offering online support. Organisations include Turn2me, My Mind, Jigsaw and Pieta.

Turn2me offers 1-1 counselling for those aged 18+. Counselling is via video, chat/messaging or email. Adults have the option of up to six free counselling sessions. The uptake to this service in 2023 and 2024 is as follows:

- 2023- there were **1076** support group participants, **7233** counselling sessions delivered and **3824** counselling participants
- 2024- there were **1081** support group participants, **7995** counselling sessions delivered and **4380** counselling participants

Turn2me does not have a wait list. They offer short-term counselling with recurring vacancies which are immediately posted online for users.

MyMind is a counselling and psychotherapy service offering individual online or face-to-face sessions to adults and couples. Face-to-face therapy is offered to children and adolescents. Between 2023 and



2024, **10,031** clients accessed the service. MyMind doesn't have a waiting list; clients can book with a therapist within 72 hours.

Jigsaw offers primary care mental health online and face-to-face services for young people aged between 12-25. Face-to-face services are within specific catchment areas across the country

Jigsaw Live Chat provides therapeutic support through emails and chat sessions with Jigsaw clinicians, as well as group chats. In 2024, there were **8982 referrals** to Jigsaw services. Jigsaw delivered **62,000** clinical contacts with young people in 2024.

Currently, the average wait time for face-to-face sessions is 2.8 weeks and two weeks for online support. The target is for >90% of young people referred to be offered a first appointment within 4 weeks.

Pieta provides counselling to adults and under 18s via, phone, video and in-person. In-person therapy is available via 11 centres and 15 outreach services. Funding for the counselling service is predominantly via fundraised income. The HSE funding contributes 18% of costs. The total number of clients seen in 2023 was **6,865** and **6,919** in 2024. Waiting times are as below:

Average wait time in days AA (Awaiting Assessment):

- 2023 – 7 days
- 2024 – 5 days
- 2025 (Jan-Sept) - 6 days

Average wait time in days AAT (Assessed Awaiting Therapist):

- 2023 – 17 days
- 2024 – 15 days
- 2025 (Jan-Sept) – 29 days

Yours Sincerely,

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