



Office of the Head of Primary Care
Services
Community Health Organisation
Midlands Louth Meath

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30th October, 2025

Deputy Micheál Carrigy
Leinster House
Kildare St.
Dublin 2

Re: PQ reference 56600/25 – Representation from Deputy Micheál Carrigy requesting the specific measures being implemented in CHO8 to reduce the physiotherapy waiting times at St. Joseph's Care Centre, Longford; the target reduction by quarter for the next 12 months and the expected timeframe to eliminate waits beyond 26 weeks.

Dear Deputy Carrigy,

Thank you for your query. The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above representation, which you recently submitted. In preparing this response your representation has been discussed with the relevant Managers. I have examined the matter and outline the position as follows.

The physiotherapy outpatient department at St. Joseph's Care centre provides a primary care outpatient service to the population living in Longford and Central Westmeath. The population of this region is 49,859.

All persons living in within the Longford and Central Westmeath community healthcare network can be referred to the physiotherapy primary care service through a number of sources e.g., Public Health Nurse, Health & Social Care Profession staff, GP, consultant, Acute hospital or self-referral. The information received on the referral will be screened by an experienced physiotherapist and using our regional prioritisation PPPG, the referral will be wait listed accordingly.

All priority 1 referrals are seen within a target time of 3 weeks as per regional PPPGs. Priority 2 referrals are waitlisted chronologically.

On average 2,300 referrals are received into this outpatient service annually, with 6.3WTE approved physiotherapy staff assigned to this service, with an additional 1.0WTE delimited due to the pay and numbers strategy.

At this time there is a 23% vacancy due to a maternity leave and a resignation in September 2025.

All relevant paperwork has been submitted to the recruitment process to fill permanently fill the vacancy and temporarily fill the maternity leave with agency cover.



All efforts are being made with the available resources to reduce the wait times for service users; validation of the list is completed routinely, group-based intervention is provided where appropriate and services users are appointed by telephone to enhance compliance with attendance.

On 30th September 2025, there were 965 people waiting for an initial assessment at the physiotherapy outpatient department at St. Joseph's Care centre, with 47% of these are waiting over 26 weeks. As the wait times are dependent on referral rates and resources available to complete assessment and interventions, it is difficult to project target reductions by quarter. With a 23% of the WTE staffing vacancy, and a loss of 1.0WTE due to the pay and numbers strategy, it is likely that the wait times will increase.

I trust the above is in order but please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any further queries in this regard.

Yours sincerely,

Joseph Ruane
Head of Primary Care Services
Midlands Louth Meath Community Health Organisation