

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
BY THE CONNÉTABLE OF ST. JOHN
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 14th FEBRUARY 2022
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 21st FEBRUARY 2022**

Question

“Further to the response to [Written Question 482/2021](#), will the Minister advise –

- (a) how many children are currently on the waiting list for Speech and Language therapies;
- (b) what the waiting times are from referral to first appointment;
- (c) what the target waiting time is from referral to first appointment;
- (d) how many staff are employed in this area; and
- (e) how many of such staff are permanent and how many are locums?”

Answer

- a) As of 18 February 2022, 166 children are currently on the waitlist for an initial communication assessment appointment.
- b) The wait time from referral to first appointment for an initial communication assessment appointment is 34+ weeks. Children are assessed and then seen for ongoing therapeutic input immediately post-assessment.

Triage Priority Rating	Average wait time- Communication assessments	Swallowing assessments
Red/ High Priority	34+ weeks	2 days- target maintained
Amber/ Medium Priority	36+ weeks	2 weeks- target maintained
Green/ Low Priority	40+ weeks	4 weeks- target maintained

- c) Current wait time targets are based on historical Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists guidance. This is to be reviewed as part of the service review.

Triage Priority Rating	Communication	Swallowing
Red/ High Priority	13 weeks	2 days
Amber/ Medium Priority	17 weeks	2 weeks
Green/ Low Priority	20 weeks	4 weeks

- d) 16 staff members are employed within the paediatric speech and language therapy department with an additional 2 staff members due to work full-time for 6 months starting end of February 2022 to support COVID recovery waitlist initiatives within the team.

- e) 15 staff members are permanent and 2 temporary contract COVID recovery staff members are due to start end of February 2022. There is only one locum staff member, the current Interim Head of Service for Speech and Language Therapy.