



**Peadar Toibin TD**  
**Dail Eireann,**  
**Leinster House,**  
**Kildare Street,**  
**Dublin 2.**

2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021

**PQ 3300/21**

**“To ask the Minister for Health the number of children on waiting lists for optometrists and ophthalmologists in each county in each of the past three years; the average waiting times and the longest times for waiting for children’s optometrists and ophthalmologists in each county in each of the past three years. -Peadar Tóibín”**

Dear Deputy Toibin,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (Reference 3300/21), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

The has no waiting list specific to optometrists and also note that for ophthalmology the HSE does not report average waiting times. See attached the other requested data;

- Appendix 1: Ophthalmology - number of patients aged under 18 years old waiting for treatment at December 2018 – 2020
- Appendix 2: Ophthalmology – Longest wait time for patients aged under 18 years old at December 2018 to 2020 (note longest wait time is shown in number of weeks waiting)

To address the current third wave of Covid infections there was a requirement to prioritise the level of services delivered during this period. Building upon the experience from earlier waves of the pandemic, Community Services have developed a prioritisation framework to support local decisions to be made on service prioritisation. This approach will ensure that services will be focused on identifying and supporting patients who have the greatest need and enabling staff to be deployed where necessary to support these patients. Where services are curtailed or reduced, this will be in line with clinical approval, a shared national position and with an appropriate risk assessment and communication with providers, service users and families. It is the intention of Community Services that full services would return as soon as is safe and practicable.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic of level of service continued to be provided for those adult and paediatric referrals to ophthalmology for those referrals which were considered to be a priority.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely



**TJ Dunford**

Head of Operations; Primary Care.  
Community Operations.