



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

**WRITTEN QUESTION
FOR ANSWER BY THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
ON 15 JUNE 2021**

Mike Hedges (Swansea East): How many children in Wales are on an NHS waiting list because they have been referred by schools for an assessment of their neuro-physiological development in relation to possible additional learning needs? (WQ82601)

Mike Hedges (Swansea East): What is the longest period of time that patients have served on a waiting list in Wales, broken down by each health board? (WQ82602)

Mike Hedges (Swansea East): What is the total annual capacity in the NHS for undertaking and completing neuro-physiological development assessments of children to identify possible additional learning needs? (WQ82604)

Eluned Morgan:

As with all services, the capacity to deliver neuro-developmental services has been affected by the COVID pandemic which has seen waiting times increase.

The number of children on a waiting list for neuro-physiological development covers all referrals. It is not possible to ascertain how many of those referrals have been made by schools.

However, the data on the number of children on the waiting list only refers to ASD and ADHD patients. At the end of March 2021, there were 6,806 children waiting. Of these, 2,193 (32%) had been waiting less than 26 weeks and 3,570 had been waiting over 52 weeks. The target is for 80% to be waiting less than 26 weeks.

In terms of the longest waiting patients by health board, the data is aggregated into time bands: those waiting less than 26 weeks, 26-35 weeks, 36-51 weeks and over 52 weeks. The table below shows the number of children waiting over 52 weeks at the end of March by health board.

	Number over 52 weeks
Aneurin Bevan	7
Betsi Cadwaladr	1,325
Cardiff and Vale	424
Cwm Taf Morgannwg	245
Hywel Dda	1,023
Powys	31
Swansea Bay	515
Total	3,570

With regard to the available capacity, the demand for assessment / diagnosis of neurodevelopmental conditions (NDC) continues to increase. This is likely to reflect a number of reasons including increasing awareness of NDC; the legacy of undiagnosed cases and the waiting lists ND services and Integrated Autism Services (IASs) inherited: a broadening of diagnostic criteria (e.g. for Autism Spectrum Condition); and a perception that a diagnosis is required to access services, particularly in relation to education. COVID-19 has added to these pressures. To fully understand the issues, bottlenecks, constraints and gaps that are affecting the ability to deliver timely and high-quality services, the Welsh Government has committed to undertaking a review of neurodevelopmental services.

In February 2021, the Welsh Government procured, through competitive tender, People and Work to carry out a review of the demand, capacity and design of ND services for children, young people and adults in Wales in order to develop recommendations and evidence-informed options for improvements to services.

This is a complex policy area covering health, education and social care; children and adult services (which often have markedly different cultures and approaches) and the public and third sector. The Review will take a whole systems approach to understand (and map) the current situation across the seven Health Boards, including identifying the demand, capacity and design of ND services for children, young people and adults across the seven Health Boards (HBs).

The contract for the Review will conclude in March 2022 and the findings of this work will be published on the Welsh Government website.
