



Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,
31-33 Sráid Chaitríona, Luimneach.

Office of the Head of Operations,
Disability Services/Social Care Division,
31-33 Catherine Street, Limerick.

T: 00353 (0) 61 483369
Suíomh Gréasáin/Website: <http://www.hse.ie>

22nd July 2022

Deputy Holly Cairns,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: holly.cairns@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Cairns,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the following parliamentary questions, which were submitted to this department for response.

PQ 39548/22

To ask the Minister for Health the number of children and young persons on waiting lists for an assessment of need in each HSE region.

PQ 39549/22

To ask the Minister for Health the number of children currently on waiting lists for therapeutic care in each children's disability network team according to each speciality; the average waiting time for an appointment; and if he will make a statement on the matter

HSE Response

Since Part 2 of the Disability Act commenced in June 2007, the HSE has endeavoured to meet its legislative obligations under the Act. However, as a consequence of a High Court ruling of December 2009, the effect of which was to open eligibility to all children born after 1st June 2002, the number of children aged five and over, and in addition of school-going age, has risen steadily as a percentage of all applications received. At the end of 2011, the figure stood at 26%, while throughout 2021, this figure averaged 53%. This is a reflection that the AON process is an accumulative process in terms of numbers of children seeking access. However, it is acknowledged that the numbers of assessments overdue for completion remain high.

A High Court judgement delivered on 11th March 2022 has impacted on the completion of assessments since that date. As a consequence of the judgement, Assessment Officers cannot complete assessments based on the agreed Preliminary Team Assessment format. As a result, activity for the second quarter of 2022 indicates that there has been an increase in the total number of applications 'overdue for completion', which now stands at 2,447 (excluding those applications for which an extended time-frame was negotiated with the parent on the grounds of there being exceptional circumstances as provided for in paragraph 10 of the regulations).

The requirement to provide diagnostic assessments under the terms of the Act for children who applied for their AONs between January 2020 and December 2021 will further impact on compliance in the coming months.

The most recent information regarding the number of children and young persons on waiting lists for an assessment of need is given in the Table below.



Applications overdue for completion - End of Quarter 2 2022

CHO	Overdue ¹	Overdue/ Exceptional Circumstances ²	Overdue/ No Exceptional Circumstances	<1 month	1 - 3 Months	>3 Months
AREA 1	156	5	151	31	65	60
AREA 2	48	1	47	7	28	13
AREA 3	87	0	87	45	35	7
AREA 4	587	64	523	38	73	476
AREA 5	123	1	122	15	22	86
AREA 6	115	1	114	13	49	53
AREA 7	452	0	452	108	157	187
AREA 8	236	2	234	42	74	120
AREA 9	727	10	717	66	214	447
Total	2531	84	2447	365	717	1449

¹All assessment reports that were not completed within 6 months of application or within 3 months of Start Stage 2 and before the end of the quarter are included in this report.

²The number of Assessment Reports for which an extended time-frame was negotiated with the parent on the grounds of there being exceptional circumstances as provided for in paragraph 10 of the regulations. Consent to extension is only valid if agreed extension date has not already passed.

The HSE are continuing to review the files of all children who received a preliminary team assessment and engaging directly with families to establish what additional assessments will be required to meet the requirements of the Act. Additional funding has been secured to support the additional assessments required.

The HSE's Clinical Programme for People with Disability in cooperation with Community Operations, Disability Services will implement a process over the coming weeks for a revised approach to Assessment of Need. In developing this clinical guidance, the HSE has engaged with a wide range of stakeholders, including families, service providers, staff and representative bodies in an intensive consultation to develop a pathway for AONs that seeks to comply with the requirements of the Act but also protects the commitment to the provision of intervention.

The HSE remains committed to the delivery of appropriate services for children with disabilities and will work with families and staff to develop services that meet their needs.

Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs)

In 2021, the remainder of ninety-one multidisciplinary CDNTs were established to provide services and supports for all children with complex needs within a defined geographic area.

Work is ongoing on mapping specialised services and supports, and paediatric supports available and gap analysis for children with highly complex needs in order to develop standardised approaches to integrated pathways of support for CDNTs and Primary Care staff.

Children and their families will have access to the full range of services and supports of the CDNT according to their individual needs. This includes universal, targeted and specialist supports, such as individual therapeutic intervention and access to specialist consultation and assessment when needed. Supports will be provided as is feasible in the child's natural environments - their home, school and community.

National Information Management System for the CDNTs (CDNTIMS)

Historically the number of children waitlisted for children's disability services provided by section 38 and section 39 providers has not been available nationally. The establishment of CDNTs will facilitate the collection of this data. A National Management Information System for all 91 CDNTs is in development and when implemented, will provide current data on waiting lists and other details for all CDNTs. In the interim, manual data collection is on-going and will provide information to the local areas regarding the number of children waiting for each CDNT.

The data provided in the table below shows the number of children that are waiting for an initial contact with a CDNT in the 9 CHO Areas: Data for CHO 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9 represents end of May activity; Data from CHO 5 is for end April; and CHO 8 for end March 2022.

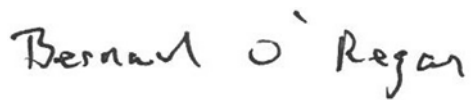


Please note that the CDNTs do not collect activity data by individual discipline (such as SLT, Physiotherapy, OT etc) as this does not align with the interdisciplinary model of care. In this context, discipline-specific data is not available.

Please also note that this is an interim dataset as we await the roll out of the National Information Management System and some individual CDNTs indicate that they do not have a system in place to capture this level of activity, therefore there are gaps in data returns for some of the CHO Areas.

Status Report - June 2022	CHO1	CHO2	CHO3	CHO4	CHO5	CHO6	CHO7	CHO8	CHO9
No. of children waiting 0-3 months for an initial contact @ month end	116	273	281	224	56	163	212	398	142
No. of children waiting 4-6 months for an initial contact @ month end	115	803	201	224	247	140	233	1047	162
No. of children waiting 6-12 months for an initial contact @ month end	88	599	250	606	1001	262	752	372	435
No. of children waiting over 12 months for an initial contact @ month end	422	-	340	1892	0	507	1484	1229	2159

Yours Sincerely,



**Mr Bernard O'Regan,
Head of Operations - Disability Services,
Community Operations**