



Oifig an Stiúrthóir Cúnta Náisiúnta,
Foireann Míchumais Náisiúnta,
An Chéad Urlár - Oifigí 13, 14, 15,
Àras Phlásóg na Rós, Coimpléasc Gnó na hOllscoile,
Páirc Náisiúnta Teicneolaíochta,
Caladh an Treoigh,
Luimneach.

Office of the Assistant National Director,
National Disability Team,
First Floor- Offices 13, 14, 15,
Roselawn House, University Business Complex,
National Technology Park,
Castletroy,
Limerick.

10th May 2024

Deputy Emer Higgins,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: emer.higgins@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Higgins,

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

PQ: 11551/24

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the process used to prioritise children on waiting lists for both an assessment of needs and access to critically needed therapists; if this process is understood by families; if they know where their child is on the list; how they are updated on their progress up the list; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

HSE Response

The National Policy on Access to Services for Children & Young People with Disability & Developmental Delay ensures that children are directed to the appropriate service based on the complexity of their presenting needs rather than based on diagnosis. Many children and adults with a disability who have support needs can be effectively supported within mainstream child and adult health services. This policy provides a single point of entry, signposting parents and referrers to the most appropriate service (Primary Care for non-complex functional difficulties and Children's Disability Network Teams for complex functional difficulties).

Childrens' Disability Services

91 Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) are aligned to 96 Community Healthcare Networks (CHNs) across the country and are providing services and supports for children aged from birth to 18 years of age.

The CDNTs are currently providing services and supports for 45,741 children and strategies and supports for urgent cases on the waitlist where staffing resources allow. However, there are significant challenges for CDNTs including:

- Significant staffing vacancies



- Growth in numbers of children with complex need
- Growth in demand for Assessment of Need, diverting further resources away from interventions.

The model of service for all CDNTs is family-centred and based on the needs of the child. This includes universal, targeted and specialised supports and interventions, as appropriate to the individual child and family. Clinicians working on CDNTs undertake assessments, reviews and provide interventions for children on their caseloads.

With regard to prioritisation of children on the waiting list for assessment and intervention by a CDNT please see the attached national policy for CDNTs. This national policy provides guidance to the CDNTs on prioritisation of referrals for assessment and intervention, taking into account both the child's and the family's needs. If the child is placed on a waiting list for services, their families must be given information about how the waiting list is managed and a guideline regarding the current waiting period for initial appointment.

This policy is currently being reviewed by a national working group.

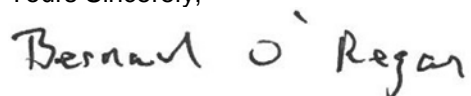
With regard to applications for Assessment of Need under the Disability Act 2005, applications are logged chronologically on the date that they are received, however children do not require an Assessment of Need as defined by the Disability Act (2005) in order to access a CDNT or Primary Care service. They can be referred by a healthcare professional or parent/carer directly to the CDNT for children with complex needs as a result of their disability, or to Primary Care for children with non-complex needs.

Further information regarding childrens' disability services can be found at:

<https://www2.hse.ie/services/disability/childrens-services/services/overview/>

This website will provide information for families regarding the services and contact details in their local area.

Yours Sincerely,



Bernard O'Regan
Assistant National Director
National Disability Team

