



Oifig an Stiúrthóir Cúnta Náisiúnta,
Foireann Míchumais Náisiúnta,
An Chéad Urlár - Oifigí 13, 14, 15,
Áras 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.

29th May 2024

Deputy Sean Sherlock,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: sean.sherlock@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Sherlock,

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: 23355/24

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the number of children waiting on an assessment of need by each health area; the number of children for last year waiting , can the information be presented, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

HSE Response

The Assessment of Need process is set out in the [Disability Act, 2005](#). The aim of an Assessment of Need under the Disability Act is to identify whether a person has a disability, the nature and extent of the disability, any health and education needs arising from that disability, as well as what services are required to meet those needs.

The judgement of Ms Justice S Phelan in the case of CTM & JA v the HSE was delivered in March 2022. This judgment found that the Preliminary Team Assessment approach described in the HSE's Standard Operating Procedure for Assessment of Need does not meet the requirements of the Disability Act. This judgement in effect requires the HSE to deliver diagnostic assessments where necessary and appropriate as part of the Assessment of Need process. This ruling has had a significant impact operationally and has resulted in a growth in the numbers of overdue Assessments of Need. The requirement for services to prioritise the statutory Assessment of Need process has also impacted significantly on their capacity to provide necessary intervention / treatment for children with disabilities.

As a result of the Judgement, activity indicates that there has been an increase in the total number of applications 'overdue for completion', which now stands at 9,924 (including 369 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).

Overall, it is estimated that there are approximately 15,000 applications 'overdue for completion' at this time. This includes AONs currently overdue and Preliminary Team Assessments that now require diagnostic assessment.



In addition, an estimated 8,000 new AONs are anticipated during 2024 based on the number of AONs received over in 2023.

Assessment of Need is reported on quarterly. The most recent data available is the end of Quarter 1 2024. 9,924 applications are overdue for completion with 369 of these on the grounds of there being exceptional circumstances as provided for in paragraph 10 of the regulations.

Please see the Table below. **Table: Applications overdue for Completion on 31st March 2024.**

CHO	LHO	Overdue	<1 month	1 - 3 Months	>3 Months
AREA 1		384	23	39	322
	Cavan/Monaghan	140	13	19	108
	Donegal	226	10	20	196
	Sligo/Leitrim	18	0	0	18
AREA 2		208	25	42	141
	Galway	118	16	23	79
	Mayo	69	6	13	50
	Roscommon	21	3	6	12
AREA 3		365	12	17	336
	Clare	44	3	4	37
	Limerick	187	4	2	181
	Tipperary N.R	134	5	11	118
AREA 4		798	89	108	601
	Kerry	33	8	3	22
	Cork North	192	21	26	145
	Cork North Lee	388	40	51	297
	Cork South Lee	161	18	23	120
	Cork West	24	2	5	17
AREA 5		482	51	56	375
	Carlow/Kilkenny	101	17	6	78
	Tipperary S.R	70	4	4	62
	Waterford	114	8	18	88
	Wexford	197	22	28	147
AREA 6		857	85	154	618
	Dublin South East	176	20	32	124
	Dublin South	210	15	35	160
	Wicklow	471	50	87	334
AREA 7		3248	147	275	2826
	Dublin South City	290	17	24	249
	Dublin South West	1005	52	83	870
	Dublin West	915	34	79	802
	Kildare/West Wicklow	1038	44	89	905
AREA 8		923	118	172	633
	Laois/Offaly	260	47	42	171
	Longford/Westmeath	30	4	9	17
	Louth	274	45	63	166
	Meath	359	22	58	279
AREA 9		2659	114	256	2289
	North Dublin	1773	58	135	1580
	Dublin North Centre	164	13	33	118
	North West Dublin	722	43	88	591
Total		9924	664	1119	8141



With regard to last year please see the table below which gives data for applications over due for completion Quarter 4 2023. Of the 8,893 applications that are overdue, 6,963 (78%) are overdue for longer than 3 months.

CHO	LHO	Overdue	<1 month	1 - 3 Months	>3 Months
AREA 1		389	15	64	310
	Cavan/Monaghan	133	14	28	91
	Donegal	202	1	22	179
	Sligo/Leitrim	54	0	14	40
AREA 2		182	40	42	100
	Galway	103	20	30	53
	Mayo	62	14	7	41
	Roscommon	17	6	5	6
AREA 3		369	17	23	329
	Clare	45	4	1	40
	Limerick	201	6	18	177
	Tipperary N.R	123	7	4	112
AREA 4		780	89	103	588
	Kerry	38	5	8	25
	Cork North	178	21	42	115
	Cork North Lee	345	33	21	291
	Cork South Lee	193	23	27	143
	Cork West	26	7	5	14
AREA 5		398	5	28	365
	Carlow/Kilkenny	78	2	16	60
	Tipperary S.R	62	3	4	55
	Waterford	95	0	0	95
	Wexford	163	0	8	155
AREA 6		706	104	159	443
	Dublin South East	134	26	34	74
	Dublin South	186	16	43	127
	Wicklow	386	62	82	242
AREA 7		2843	183	317	2343
	Dublin South City	252	12	31	209
	Dublin South West	875	60	112	703
	Dublin West	809	47	81	681
	Kildare/West Wicklow	907	64	93	750
AREA 8		750	133	182	435
	Laois/Offaly	207	34	36	137
	Longford/Westmeath	41	8	10	23
	Louth	193	50	70	73
	Meath	309	41	66	202
AREA 9		2476	170	256	2050
	North Dublin	1716	98	171	1447
	Dublin North Centre	125	22	19	84
	North West Dublin	635	50	66	519

Actions to address AON waiting lists

The HSE's National Clinical Programme for People with Disability (NCPDP) has led the process of developing a revised AON Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) incorporating guidance on completion of clinical assessment to replace the



element of the SOP which was found to be non-compliant with the Disability Act (2005) – the Preliminary Team Assessment. This was launched on July 14th 2023.

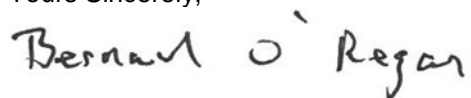
Additional funding

Approximately €10.5m was spent to address waiting lists for clinical assessments identified through the Assessment of Need process and in 2024, €5m in one off funding has been allocated. This funding is being utilised to procure diagnostic ASD assessments from the private sector. In addition, the HSE at local level is using time related savings to source AON assessments privately for children in the order as registered on the AOS (AON information management system).

A National AON tender process has been completed for the delivery of Assessment of Need from private providers. This will provide limited additional private capacity in provision of AONs due to level of private service provider engaged already for AONs. However, learning from this tender process will be shared with CHOs to support standardisation across CHOs.

In line with appropriate procurement procedures, Garda vetting and due diligence practice, private providers are currently being contracted by the HSE to provide assessments and / or interventions. In such instances, the HSE ensures that the contracted providers are appropriately qualified and that any assessments or interventions are provided in line with the appropriate standards.

Yours Sincerely,



Bernard O'Regan
Assistant National Director
National Disability Team

