

12th June, 2024

Ms. Holly Cairns, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2.

PQ ref 23706/24

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth further to Parliamentary Question No. 1355 of 9 April 2024, the number of young people on the assessment of need waiting lists in the HSE areas of north Lee, south Lee, west Cork, north Cork and Kerry; and if these waiting-list figures are separate from or part of the figures provided for CHO4 primary care psychology services in response PQ 14286/24.

Dear Deputy Cairns,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question which you submitted to the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth for response.

Children and young people born on or after 1st June 2002 who are suspected of having a disability can apply for an Assessment of Need (AON) under the Disability Act (2005). The Act provides for an assessment of the child's health and education needs. The Assessment of Need process consists of two stages. Stage 1 involves a review of the application by an Assessment Officer. It is a combined desktop and information gathering exercise carried out by an Assessment Officer that includes receiving an application, acknowledging its receipt, ensuring the application is completed in full, checking the child's eligibility and requesting additional reports or information from the parents if they were not supplied with the application. Where appropriate, Stage 2 commences when the child / young person is referred for a clinical assessment.

Assessment of Need data is reported on a quarterly basis. The most recent available report provides data as at 31st March, 2024. In the first three months of this year, 371 referrals for AON were received from the Cork Kerry area. During the same period, 247 AON reports were completed.

At the 31st March 2024 there were 33 AONs overdue to commence with a further 798 overdue to complete in the Cork Kerry area. Twenty-three assessments were overdue because of exceptional circumstances. These are assessments that are delayed at the request of, or in agreement with the applicant or their parent.

There are currently no children / young people awaiting an assessment with Primary Care Psychology as part of their statutory Assessment of Need.

The volume of applications for AON has grown steadily since the commencement of Part 2 of the Disability Act (2005) on 1st June 2007. Notwithstanding the increased demand, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare has progressed a number of waiting list initiatives to improve our compliance with the legislative timeframes for AON.

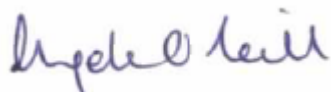
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare acknowledges the lengthy waiting times that parents are experiencing under the Assessment of Need process. We sincerely regret that any child has to wait for an assessment and both management and staff fully appreciate the level of stress that families are experiencing due to the current waiting times. It is important to note that an Assessment of Need under

the Disability Act (2005) is not required to access HSE or HSE funded services. Families can refer their children directly to services. Cork Kerry Community Healthcare is committed to the delivery of appropriate services for people with disabilities and will work with service users, families and service providers to develop services that meet their needs.

Please see breakdown of referrals received (table 1) and applications overdue for completion (table 2) in appendix 1 by area (Kerry, North Cork, Cork North Lee, Cork South Lee, West Cork).

If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Yours sincerely



**Ms. Angela O'Neill,
Head of Disability Services,
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare**



Table 1: Assessment of Need Referrals by area Q1/ 2024

Assessment of Need - Applications received			
CHO4	2024		
Area	Jan	Feb	Mar
Kerry	12	14	13
Cork North	27	29	29
Cork North Lee	39	53	40
Cork South Lee	27	22	44
Cork West	9	9	4
Monthly Total	114	127	130
Quarterly Total			371

Table 2: Assessment of Need Reports Overdue for Completion by area Q1/ 2024

Assessment of Need - Total Overdue for Completion			
CHO4	2024		
Area	Total Overdue	Overdue/ Exceptional circumstances	Overdue/ no exceptional circumstances
Kerry	33	1	32
Cork North	192	9	183
Cork North Lee	388	10	378
Cork South Lee	161	0	161
Cork West	24	3	21
Totals	798	23	775