

20<sup>th</sup> September, 2024

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

**PQ ref 33847/24**

**“To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth further to Parliamentary Question No. 375 of 28 May 2024, the exact wait time in months, and, where applicable, months and years, for assessments of need in each of the HSE areas of North Lee, South Lee, West Cork, North Cork and Kerry, in tabular form.”**

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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 to determine if a child has a disability and any health and education needs arising from that disability.

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 is Quarter 2 2024. Year to date 2024 (Jan – June) 927 applications for AON were received in CKCH. This accounts for an 80.5% increase over the same period last year when 514 applications were received.

At the end of Q2/ 2024 there were 829 AONs overdue for completion when you exclude the 20 that are overdue for exceptional circumstances. A further 28 applications were overdue to commence stage 2.

Tables 1 and 2 provide data collected for overdue AONs (including those overdue in exceptional circumstances) and overdue to commence stage 2 of the process.

Please note that exceptional circumstances arise when an assessment is delayed due to issues such as applicant or family illness, bereavements etc.

**Table 1: Q2/ 2024 Breakdown in months - Assessment of Need Overdue for completion at Stage 2**

| CHO4           | Overdue for completion (including exceptional circumstances) | <1 month  | 1 to 3 months | >3 Months  |
|----------------|--|-----------|---------------|------------|
| Kerry          | 32   | 5         | 12            | 15         |
| Cork North     | 214  | 25        | 34            | 155        |
| Cork North Lee | 398  | 30        | 54            | 314        |
| Cork South Lee | 179  | 23        | 37            | 119        |
| Cork West      | 26   | 4         | 7             | 15         |
| <b>Totals</b>  | <b>849</b>   | <b>87</b> | <b>144</b>    | <b>618</b> |

**Table 2: Q2/ 2024 Assessment of Need Overdue to Commence Stage 2 by area**

| CHO            | Overdue   | <1 month  | 1 to 3 months | >3 Months |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|---------------|-----------|
| Kerry          | 2         | 0         | 0             | 2         |
| Cork North     | 6         | 4         | 2             | 0         |
| Cork North Lee | 11        | 4         | 4             | 3         |
| Cork South Lee | 9         | 7         | 1             | 1         |
| Cork West      | 0         | 0         | 0             | 0         |
| <b>Totals</b>  | <b>28</b> | <b>15</b> | <b>7</b>      | <b>6</b>  |

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. We are continuing to engage with third party agencies to expand the provision of AON and this will continue to reduce the time applicants are awaiting completion of AON. The continued engagement should allow



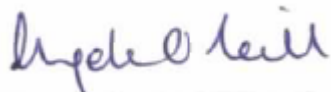
us to further reduce the time awaiting AON for those currently progressing through the AON process in CKCH.

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.

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

Yours sincerely,



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

