

PQ 33848/ 24

20th September 2024.

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

PQ ref 33848/24

“To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth if assessments of need in CHO4 are carried out by HSE staff or are outsourced to private clinicians; and if the latter, to provide details on funding for this service.”

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.

The Assessment of Need (AON) is set out in the Disability Act 2005. The Act provides for three months to complete Stage 1 of the AON process and a further three months to complete Stage 2.

Stage 1 is an initial desktop assessment that determines the type of assessment required by each child. The Assessment of Need commences at Stage 2 when the Assessment Officer arranges the clinical assessments. The Act requires each HSE area to manage applications for AON in strict chronological area.

The volume of applications for AON has grown steadily since the commencement of Part 2 of the Disability Act (2005) on 1st June 2007. The number of applications received in the twelve months up to 30th June 2024 shows a significant increase since the commencement of the Act. This increased demand is evident in all parts of the country. Notwithstanding this increased demand, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare has progressed a number of waiting list initiatives to improve our compliance with the legislative timeframes for AON.

Based on the type of assessment identified as necessary at Stage 1, an applicant may be referred for a clinical assessment by for example, a Children's Disability Network Team, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services or Primary Care Services. In an effort to address waiting times, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare has engaged with private providers to procure additional clinical assessments for ASD. Funding has been allocated by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth for this waiting list initiative.

We regret that any child's AON is delayed and understand that this is a cause of distress for parents and families.

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

Yours sincerely,



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

