



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.

10th September 2024

Deputy Pauline Tully,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: pauline.tully@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Tully,

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: 34449/24

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth further to Parliamentary Question No. 1934 of 23 July 2024, the number of children who have had a diagnostic ASD assessment completed by a private provider procured by the HSE under the new targeted waiting list initiative, in tabular form.

PQ: 34450/24

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth further to Parliamentary Question No. 1934 of 23 July 2024, the monthly targets that are in place for the delivery of diagnostic ASD assessment through private provider procured by the HSE under the new targeted waiting list initiative, in tabular form.

HSE Response

Targeted Initiative focussed on long waiting families

A targeted waiting list initiative commenced in May 2024 and the Government has allocated funding of €6.89 million to facilitate the HSE to procure up to 2,500 additional AONs, with delivery targeted over the next 6 months. This funding is in addition to existing HSE core funding of the €5m mentioned above, allocated for procurement of private assessments.

This waiting list initiative targets those families waiting longest for AONs, with the HSE reimbursing clinicians directly through the procurement of capacity from approved private providers. This provides a more equitable and fair approach rather than reimbursement of parents directly.



This initiative is being progressed through the existing framework of providers procured by each CHO Area, while also seeking to expand the list with any new private provision.

With regard to the questions asked, in order to address the longest waiting lists, and utilise the available resources in the areas with the greatest challenges, it was agreed with Government that this funding be weighted towards those areas with the greatest numbers of applications that were overdue for completion at the end of March, 2024.

In line with this approach, funding was allocated to each to each CHO area based on numbers waiting longest for AONs.

Noting that the cost of private provision varies, the HSE based it's calculations on an average cost of €2,700 per assessment. With regard to targets to be achieved, as mentioned above, it is estimated that approximately 2,500 AONs could be provided in a six month period.

Information received from the CHO Areas during August 2024, indicates that under this targeted initiative, 721 AONs have been commissioned from private providers/assessors during June and July at a cost of €2,401,158. This suggests that the average cost per AON is €3,330.

The figures for the Targeted Waiting List Initiative for June and July are as follows:

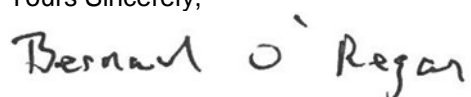
	Number of AONs	Cost	Average Cost per AON
June	379	€1,245,455	€3,300
July	342	€1,155,703	€3,379
Total to date	721	€2,401,158	€3,330

Overall, in the first half of the year, 1,841 AONs have been completed, which is a 28% increase on the same period last year. This increase is due in part to the new targeted waiting list initiative.

However, despite this increased activity in relation to AON, waiting lists are growing as demand outstrips system capacity. In this regard, we anticipate that, by the end of 2024, there will be over 18,981 AONs due for completion, comprising: AONs overdue at end of Q2 2024 (11,131); AONs expected during the remainder of 2024 (5,350); as well as 2,500 Preliminary Team Assessments carried out under the previous Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), an approach found by the High Court not to have met the requirements of the Disability Act.

It is important to note that 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 to the CDNT for children with complex needs as a result of their disability, or to Primary Care for children with non-complex needs.

Yours Sincerely,



Bernard O'Regan
Assistant National Director
National Disability Team

