

19<sup>h</sup> September, 2024

Pauline Tully T.D.  
Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2

**PQ ref. 35681/24**

**To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth if he will provide details of autism assessment waiting times in CHO1.**

Dear Deputy Tully

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position for Primary Care Services in Community Healthcare Cavan Donegal Leitrim Monaghan Sligo.

### **Cavan/Monaghan**

The waiting time for Autism Assessment in Cavan Primary Care Children's Services is currently 14 months, dependent on private providers' availability for assessment appointments. These appointments from private providers are required as Primary Care Children's Services do not have the required staff to complete same.

Currently, there is only one child waiting for Autism Assessment in Monaghan. These referrals are typically sent to private providers monthly, so the maximum wait time from referral to Primary Care to the private provider is one month. However, it is difficult to gauge how long the child waits on an assessment with the private providers. In general parents are advised that from the time of Primary Care Children's Services sending their child's information to the Private Provider, the assessment should start in about 3-4 months and be completed within about 6-7 months.

### **County Donegal**

For families that are able travel to external private (assessment) providers, the waiting time is approximately 11-12 months. This is dependent on the number of Assessment of Need referrals that are submitted to the service in each month.

For assessments which have to be completed locally via Primary Care health and social care professions; e.g. for families that cannot travel; cases that are too complex for private providers and need a therapeutic assessment approach; interpreters are required etc., the waiting time is 18-20 months.

### **Sligo/Leitrim/West Cavan/South Donegal**

The current waiting time for children referred for a HSE funded Autism diagnostic assessment, via the Sligo/Leitrim/West Cavan/South Donegal Primary Care Autism diagnostic pathway, is up to fourteen months.

Nominated private providers, who complete Autism diagnostic assessments on behalf of Sligo/Leitrim/West Cavan/South Donegal Primary Care Services, receive monthly allocations of assessment requests/files. The volume of each allocation is agreed with the individual provider and is dictated by each provider's capacity to complete assessments promptly.

In Sligo/Leitrim/West Cavan/South Donegal, assessments are scheduled by the private providers within a month of the allocation of the request/file. The service user's family typically receive verbal feedback of the assessment findings, from the private provider, within 2-3 weeks of the assessment being completed. The private provider then forwards a report, to both the service user's family and the HSE, within 6-8 weeks of the assessment being completed.

I trust this information is of assistance to you but should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



**Emma Ball**  
Acting Head Of Service Primary Care CHO1

**Ceannasaí Seirbhíse, Seirbhísí Cúram Príomhúil**  
An Cabhán, Muineachán, Sligeach, Liatroim & Dún na nGall

**Head of Service, Primary Care CHO1**  
Cavan, Monaghan, Sligo, Leitrim & Donegal.