



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
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4th March 2019

Deputy Anne Rabbitte,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
e-mail: anne.rabbitte@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Rabbitte,

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 7999/19

To ask the Minister for Health the number of young persons diagnosed on an annual basis with ASD and AAH in each CHO in tabular form; the number by age ranges (details supplied) in each of the years 2011 to 2018, by CHO; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Details supplied: details of 1 to 6, 6 to 12, 12 to 18.

HSE Response

The Health Service Executive does not currently collect information specifically on adults and children identified with Autism on a national basis.

Children who may present with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder can present either through; the Assessment of Need process under the Disability Act, 2005, through Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), or through Community Services.

In respect of those children applying for an assessment under the Disability Act 2005, the Act gives an individual with a disability the right to an assessment of their health and education needs. In relation to health services, the intention of the Assessment of Need process is to identify the health needs resulting from the child's disability. It is a matter for clinicians, based on their experience and qualifications, to decide how best to evaluate the needs at the time of the child being assessed. The Act does not give the right to a specific assessment at a particular point in time. Nor does it give a right to access to a diagnosis unless it is required at that time to identify the health needs occasioned by the disability.

The HSE records data, pertaining to the assessment of need process, under the Disability Act, 2005. The Act concentrates on identifying need and does not require diagnosis and the category of disability is only recorded where known. It should also be stressed that the Act currently only applies to those

children born after 1st June 2002 and that not all eligible children apply for an assessment under the Act.

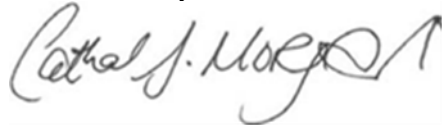
The table below is based on data extracted from the Assessment Officers' System Database (AOS) and shows the number of Assessment Reports completed for children with ASD recorded since 2012.

Recorded ASD	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
National Figure	422	515	522	582	772	955	1163

Please note that although we have experienced an increased demand for assessment of Autism, we cannot be sure that this is a result of increased prevalence. It may be due to increased awareness of autism and specialist diagnoses coupled with a recognition for the need for earlier interventions.

Many individuals with autism due to the complexity of their presentation may have a primary diagnosis of intellectual disability or a co-morbid mental health component. The National Intellectual Disability Database (NIDD) was established in 1995 to ensure that information is available to enable the Department of Health, the Health Service Executive and the non-statutory agencies in Ireland to provide appropriate services designed to meet the changing needs of people with intellectual disability and their families. The database is intended to provide a comprehensive and accurate information base for decision making in relation to planning, funding and management of services for people with an intellectual disability including individuals with autism. While the database presents information on the needs of people with intellectual disabilities, information pertaining to diagnosis is specifically excluded, as the Database is not designed as a medical epidemiological tool and is not mandatory to register on.

Yours sincerely,



**Dr. Cathal Morgan,
Head of Operations - Disability Services,
Community Operations**