

15th October 2019

Deputy Michael McGrath,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2.

PQ 39298/19

“To ask the Minister for Health the number of children awaiting an assessment of needs in the CH04 area; the length of time they are waiting; the details of the assessment of needs process; if it is desktop based; if not, if the child is actually seen; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”

Dear Deputy McGrath,

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 Health for response.

I refer to the response to PQ 39299/19 dated 14th October which gives a detailed breakdown of the AON process in Cork Kerry Community Healthcare.

Children and young people born on or after 1st June 2002 who are suspected of having a disability can apply for an Assessment of Need (AON) under the Disability Act (2005). The Act allows for an assessment of the child's health needs. The assessment of need process consists of two stages, the first stage involves a review of the referral to the assessment of need process by an assessment officer which is an administrative process: it is a combined desktop and information gathering exercise carried out by an Assessment Officer to include receiving an application, acknowledging its receipt, ensuring the application is completed in full, checking the child's eligibility, requesting additional reports or information from the parents if they were not supplied with the application, and if deemed appropriate referring the child for a clinical assessment of need. In recent years a number of initiatives had been put in place around the recruitment of 2 additional assessment officers to screen applications. At the end of 2017, we had cleared the wait list at stage one. To date, the AON office is compliant in commencing stage one of the process within the statutory 12-week timeframe as per the Disability Act 2005.

Children that are referred for an Assessment of Need move to stage two of the process which is a clinical assessment. If they receive a diagnosis or a determination of a disability, then an Assessment Officer report and Service Statement will issue.

In regard to the number of children waiting for an Assessment of Need, The numbers referred Assessment in Cork Kerry Community Healthcare are among the highest in the country, see below the numbers as they pertain to the Cork area:

- 100 Referrals received under the Disability Act per month
- 80 Referrals accepted under the Disability Act per month

Currently, there are 874 children waiting at stage 2 of the Assessment of Need (AON) process in Cork.

I trust this clarifies the situation for you.

Yours sincerely,



Ms. Deborah Harrington,
General Manager Disability Services Cork North,
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare.

