



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,
31-33 Sráid Chaitríona, Luimneach.

Office of the Head of Operations,
Disability Services/Community Operations,
31-33 Catherine Street, Limerick.

T: 00353 (0) 61 483369
Suíomh Gréasáin/Website: <http://www.hse.ie>

30th October 2019

Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House, Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
e-mail: richard.boydbarrett@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Boyd Barrett,

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 42651/19

To ask the Minister for Health if assessment of needs by school age teams have a long waiting list, if parents can have private assessments done and still avail of interventions and supports from the appropriate specialists on the teams; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

HSE Response

Since the commencement of Part 2 of the Disability Act in June 2007, (The Act), the HSE has endeavoured to meet its legislative requirements as set out in the Act. However, as a consequence of a High Court ruling of December 2009, the effect of which was to open eligibility to all children born after 1st June 2002, the number of children aged five and over, and in addition of school-going age, has risen steadily as a percentage of all applications received. At the end of 2011, the figure stood at 26%, while at end of 2018, this figure was 52%. This is a reflection that the AON process is an accumulative process in terms of numbers of children seeking access. It should be noted that the clinical teams who complete the assessments are also the teams who deliver intervention.

Assessment of Need - Private Assessments

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.

In some instances families do source private assessments which may facilitate access to educational supports such as special schools or classes. In many cases these are uni-disciplinary assessments i.e. completed by one professional e.g a psychologist. In general, HSE or HSE funded services use a multidisciplinary approach to assessment i.e. a number of professionals e.g. psychologist, speech & language therapist, occupational therapist etc. are involved in the assessment, specifically to ASD assessment. While services will take account of the private uni-disciplinary reports, they will also undertake a multidisciplinary assessment where appropriate, to confirm a diagnosis and to determine the necessary interventions

Yours sincerely,

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