



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,
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21st September 2021

Deputy Sean Sherlock,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: sean.sherlock@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Sherlock,

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: 42095/21

To ask the Minister for Health the number of children seen across all areas of intervention in each CHO area since the commencement of the Progressing Disability Services Policy on 19 April 2021; and the number awaiting for an assessment of need in each CHO since the advent of the Policy and the Children's Disability Network Team.

HSE Response

The HSE is committed to the full implementation of the Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People Programme (PDS). PDS is a significant change programme for the provision of services and supports for children from birth to 18 years of age, in line with Sláintecare and the Programme for Government, in order to:

- Provide a clear pathway and fairer access to services for all children with a disability
- Make the best use of available resources for the benefit of all children and their families
- Ensure effective teams are working in partnership with families and with education staff to support children with a disability to reach their full potential.

PDS aligns with two clear objectives of The Sláintecare Report to:

- Provide the majority of care at or as close to home as possible
- Create an integrated system of care with healthcare professionals working closely together.

Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) are being established to provide services and supports for all children with complex needs within a defined geographic area. CDNTs are teams of health and social care professionals, including nursing, occupational therapy, psychology, physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, social work and others. The team will work closely together in a family centred model, focusing on the child's and family's own priorities. Once all teams are in place, every child with complex needs will have access to a team, regardless of the nature of their disability, where they live, or the school they attend.

Children and their families will have access to the full range of services and supports of the CDNT according to their individual needs. This includes universal, targeted and specialist supports, such as individual therapeutic intervention and access to specialist consultation and assessment when needed. Supports will be provided as is feasible in the child's natural environments - their home, school and community.



Building a Better Health Service

CARE COMPASSION TRUST LEARNING

Children's Disability Network Teams have already been established in some parts of the country e.g. Clare, Cork, Donegal, Kerry, Kildare and Limerick. Other areas are now in the final phase of reconfiguration and the HSE expects that the remaining areas will commence service delivery during September 2021 with a small number of teams in the Midlands to be reconfigured in November. Disability Services to support children and their families will continue in the interim during this final planning stage. Children's disability services in Cork (excl West Cork which reconfigured in 2013) reconfigured to CDNTs on 19th April 2021.

With regard to Assessment of Need, since the Disability Act commenced in June 2007, the HSE has endeavoured to meet its legislative obligations under 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 throughout 2020, this figure averaged 54%. This is a reflection that the AON process is an accumulative process in terms of numbers of children seeking access. However, it is acknowledged that the numbers of assessments overdue for completion remain high, although there had been some improvement in these figures in 2018 and 2019 prior to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Assessment of Need is reported on a quarterly basis. The information that can be provided is end of Quarter 2 2021. It is important to note that the activity in that period may have been impacted by the recent cyber attack on the HSE.

The Table below provides the number of applications for Assessment of Need under the Disability Act that were overdue for completion on the last day of June 2021 broken down by CHO Area. The information is based on data extracted from the Assessment Officers' System Database (AOS). It is also important to note that the numbers reflect a point in time and this is not a cumulative report.

Applications overdue for Completion on 30th June 2021.

Applications are deemed 'Overdue' if it is over 6 months since the application was accepted by the HSE and there is no record of an Assessment Report being sent to the Liaison Officer or to the Applicant. This overdue figure does not include applications that have been put on hold, are closed or are ineligible for Assessment.

- 3,609 applications are overdue for completion with 381 of these on the grounds of there being exceptional circumstances as provided for in paragraph 10 of the regulations.

Applications overdue for Completion and applicants consent

CHO	LHO	Total Overdue ¹	Overdue/ Exceptional Circumstances ²	Overdue/ No Exceptional Circumstances
AREA 1		19	0	19
AREA 2		21	0	21
AREA 3		127	1	126
AREA 4		997	238	759
AREA 5		158	1	157
AREA 6		99	2	97
AREA 7		936	10	926
AREA 8		186	12	174
AREA 9		1066	117	949
Total		3609	381	3228

Yours sincerely,



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