



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

Office of the Head of Operations,
Disability Services/Social Care Division,
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12th December 2022

Deputy Violet Anne Wynne,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: violet-anne.wynne@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Wynne,

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: 60343/22

To ask the Minister for Health the average wait time for an assessment of need by county, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

HSE Response

The Disability Act (2005) provides for an Assessment of Need (AON) that outlines the health and education needs for people born on or after 1st June 2002 who are suspected of having a disability. Since Part 2 of the Disability Act commenced in June 2007, the HSE has endeavoured to meet its legislative obligations under the Act.

The HSE receives approximately 6,000 applications for these assessments each year.

The HSE's Standard Operating Procedure for Assessment of Need (SOP) was implemented for all new applications for AON from 15th January 2020. This SOP included a standardised approach to assessment which was described as a Preliminary Team Assessment.

Activity for 2021 indicates that there was significant progress in the number of Assessment of Need reports completed during the year, 8,353 by year end. This led to a significant reduction in the total number of applications 'overdue for completion.'

The High Court judgement in the case of CTM & JA v HSE delivered on 11th March 2022 directed that the Preliminary Team Assessment approach does not fulfil the requirements of the Disability Act. The judgement states that a diagnosis is usually required to determine the nature and extent of a person's disability. As a consequence of the judgement, Assessment Officers cannot complete assessments based on the HSE's Preliminary Team Assessment format. The standardised Preliminary Team Assessment approach, as defined in the SOP, is no longer being utilised to fulfil our obligations under the Disability Act 2005. Assessments of Need are currently being progressed on the



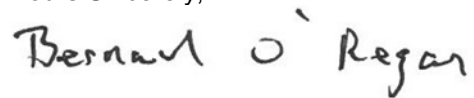
basis that clinicians are required to use their clinical judgement to determine the type and level of assessment required by each applicant.

Assessment of Need is reported on a quarterly basis. Figures for 2022 indicate that 2,624 Assessments of Need have been completed in total by the end of Quarter 3 2022. The average duration of the assessment process per report is reported at national level and in this quarter was 17.23 months.

The HSE has secured €11.7m to address the requirement for additional assessments under the terms of the Disability Act (2005) through a range of measures including recruitment of dedicated AON assessment teams, private procurement and overtime initiatives for existing staff.

The HSE remains committed to the delivery of appropriate services for children with disabilities and will work with families and staff to develop services that meet their needs.

Yours Sincerely,



Bernard O'Regan
Head of Operations - Disability Services,
Community Operations

