



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,
31-33 Catherine Street, Limerick.

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

7th March 2022

Deputy David Cullinane,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House, Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: david.cullinane@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Cullinane,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the following parliamentary questions, which were submitted to this department for response.

PQ 10688/22

To ask the Minister for Health the number of children who had an assessment of need carried out under the Disability Act 2005 to whom services identified in the assessment reports have not been provided and to break down by ages and categories of disabilities; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

PQ 10689/22

To ask the Minister for Health the number of children who made an application for an assessment of need under the Disability Act 2005 and in cases in which the commencement of the assessment was longer than three months broken down by periods longer than four, five and months, by a year or greater than a year; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

PQ 10690/22

To ask the Minister for Health the number of children who made an application for an assessment of need under the Disability Act 2005 and in case in which the completion of the assessment was longer than three months and further broken down by periods longer than four, five and six months, by a year or greater than a year; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

PQ 10691/22

To ask the Minister for Health the number of children who made an application for an assessment of need under the Disability Act 2005 and in cases in which the issuing of the service statement following the total completion of the assessment was greater than one month of the assessment and further broken down by periods longer than two, three, four, five and six months or by a year or greater than a year; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

HSE Response

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 2021, this figure averaged 53%. 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.



Activity for the year indicates that there has been significant progress in the number of Assessment of Need reports completed during the year, 8,353 by year end. This has led to a significant reduction in the total number of applications 'overdue for completion', which now stands at 1,793 (excluding those applications for which an extended time-frame was negotiated with the parent on the grounds of there being exceptional circumstances as provided for in paragraph 10 of the regulations).

The increase in activity in 2021 can be attributed to the additional funding allocated to the AON process via Slaintecare. This has been utilised to provide additional assessments through a range of options including overtime for existing staff and private procurement. The total number of overdue AONs has reduced by 63% since this additional funding was allocated.

With regard to the the number of children who had an assessment of need carried out under the Disability Act 2005 to whom services identified in the assessment reports have not been provided and broken down by ages and categories of disabilities, this information is not captured or generated from the Assessment of Need database.

With regard to the number of children who made an application for an assessment of need under the Disability Act 2005 and in cases in which the commencement of the assessment was longer than three months broken down by periods longer than four, five and months, by a year or greater than a year, this information can be obtained and examined at a point in time by referring to Table 5 **Applications Overdue to Commence Stage 2** in the Quarterly Assessment of Need Reports. To assist and for comparison, please see Appendix 1 which contains tables for Q4 for each year for the last 5 years.

With regard to the the number of children who made an application for an assessment of need under the Disability Act 2005 and cases in which the completion of the assessment was longer than three months and further broken down by periods longer than four, five and six months, by a year or greater than a year; please see Appendix 2 which contains Completion of AON within the timeline tables from the 2021 Q4 Assessment of Need Report.

With regard to the the number of children who made an application for an assessment of need under the Disability Act 2005 and in cases in which the issuing of the service statement following the total completion of the assessment was greater than one month of the assessment and further broken down by periods longer than two, three, four, five and six months or by a year or greater than a year; please see Appendix 3 which contains Service Statements Completed: Quarter 4 2021.

Standard Operating Procedure for AON

An internal HSE review of the practice of implementation of Part 2 of the Act in 2016 confirmed anecdotal evidence that the approach to AON was not consistent across the country. It was apparent that practice varied widely across the 9 Community Health Organisation (CHO) areas as well as within CHO areas. While a large number of "Guidance Notes" regarding AON processes had been issued since 2007, there had been no nationally standardised or agreed definition of an Assessment of Need. This led to an inconsistent approach to assessment as well as inequity in terms of time afforded to 'assessment' versus 'support or treatment' interventions with children and their families.

To help address this situation, the HSE has implemented a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the Assessment of Need process to ensure that;

- Children with disabilities and their families access appropriate assessment and intervention as quickly as possible.
- The approach to Assessment of Need is consistent across all areas.

In line with this procedure, Stage 2 of the Assessment of Need process comprises a Preliminary Team Assessment that will identify initial interventions and any further assessments that may be required. This preliminary assessment will usually be undertaken by a children's disability service that are also tasked with delivering intervention. The Standard Operating Procedure provides an indicative timeframe for this assessment, however, the format for each assessment is a matter for the assessing clinicians and will be based on the information provided through the stage 1 desktop assessment. While not required by the Act, diagnostic assessments will continue to be provided, as appropriate, and these will be captured in the child's Service Statement as part of the Assessment of Need process.

These changes are intended to alleviate the current situation where children in some parts of the country may wait a number of years before they can access an assessment. During this waiting period, they often have little or no access to intervention or support. It is intended that the changes in the SOP, particularly the new preliminary assessment, will facilitate children with disabilities to access assessment in a timelier fashion.



Overall Reform of Children's Disability Services

The implementation of the Progressing Disability Services for Children & Young People (PDS) programme is agreed Government and HSE policy. This policy supports the reconfiguration of children's disability services to provide equitable, child and family centred services based on need rather than diagnosis. This aligns with the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.

The Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People (PDS) model addresses the previous inequity in service provision whereby there may have been an excellent service for some children and little or no service for others. This variance may have been linked to diagnosis, age group or geography. Under the PDS programme children's disability services are changing from diagnosis based to needs based, so that all children with a disability or developmental delay have access to the right service based on their needs no matter where they live.

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.

The National Policy on Access to Services for Children & Young People with Disability & Developmental Delay ensures that children are directed to the appropriate service based on the complexity of their presenting needs rather than based on diagnosis. Many children with a disability who have support needs can be effectively supported within mainstream health services. This policy provides a single point of entry, signposting parents and referrers to the most appropriate service (Primary Care for non-complex functional difficulties and Children's Disability Network Teams for complex functional difficulties).


Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs)

In 2021, ninety one Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) were 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. 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

Yours sincerely



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



Appendix 1:

Applications Overdue to Commence Stage 2- each Q4 report

5. Applications Overdue to commence Stage 2 on 31st December 2021.

- 602 applications due to commence stage 2 by the end of the 4th Quarter, 2021 had not done so.

CHO	LHO	Overdue	<1 month	1 - 3 Months	>3 Months
AREA 1		22	21	1	0
	Cavan/Monaghan	0	0	0	0
	Donegal	15	14	1	0
	Sligo/Leitrim	7	7	0	0
AREA 2		0	0	0	0
	Galway	0	0	0	0
	Mayo	0	0	0	0
	Roscommon	0	0	0	0
AREA 3		15	9	4	2
	Clare	0	0	0	0
	Limerick	15	9	4	2
	Tipperary N.R	0	0	0	0
AREA 4		434	35	50	349
	Kerry	26	4	1	21
	Cork North	56	4	7	45
	Cork North Lee	221	16	24	181
	Cork South Lee	131	11	18	102
	Cork West	0	0	0	0
AREA 5		8	5	2	1
	Carlow/Kilkenny	0	0	0	0
	Tipperary S.R	7	5	2	0
	Waterford	0	0	0	0
	Wexford	1	0	0	1
AREA 6		2	1	0	1
	Dublin South East	0	0	0	0
	Dublin South	1	0	0	1
	Wicklow	1	1	0	0
AREA 7		61	24	18	19
	Dublin South City	6	3	1	2
	Dublin South West	18	3	6	9
	Dublin West	12	5	5	2
	Kildare/West Wicklow	25	13	6	6
AREA 8		16	9	3	4
	Laois/Offaly	8	4	0	4
	Longford/Westmeath	0	0	0	0
	Louth	0	0	0	0
	Meath	8	5	3	0
AREA 9		44	19	5	20
	North Dublin	13	6	1	6
	Dublin North Centre	7	4	1	2
	North West Dublin	24	9	3	12
Total		602	123	83	396

Note: Applications that were placed on hold are not included in this report

5. Applications Overdue to commence Stage 2 on 31st December 2020.



- 1,017 applications due to commence stage 2 by the end of the 4th Quarter, 2020 had not done so.

CHO	LHO	Overdue	<1 month	1 - 3 Months	>3 Months
AREA 1		1	1	0	0
	Cavan/Monaghan	0	0	0	0
	Donegal	1	1	0	0
	Sligo/Leitrim	0	0	0	0
AREA 2		0	0	0	0
	Galway	0	0	0	0
	Mayo	0	0	0	0
	Roscommon	0	0	0	0
AREA 3		2	0	1	1
	Clare	0	0	0	0
	Limerick	2	0	1	1
	Tipperary N.R	0	0	0	0
AREA 4		245	54	56	135
	Kerry	3	2	1	0
	Cork North	54	10	15	29
	Cork North Lee	98	22	29	47
	Cork South Lee	90	20	11	59
	Cork West	0	0	0	0
AREA 5		47	5	0	42
	Carlow/Kilkenny	2	2	0	0
	Tipperary S.R	1	1	0	0
	Waterford	0	0	0	0
	Wexford	44	2	0	42
AREA 6		3	3	0	0
	Dublin South East	1	1	0	0
	Dublin South	0	0	0	0
	Wicklow	2	2	0	0
AREA 7		293	65	82	146
	Dublin South City	32	10	11	11
	Dublin South West	121	26	30	65
	Dublin West	47	9	9	29
	Kildare/West Wicklow	93	20	32	41
AREA 8		3	3	0	0
	Laois/Offaly	0	0	0	0
	Longford/Westmeath	0	0	0	0
	Louth	0	0	0	0
	Meath	3	3	0	0
AREA 9		423	40	17	366
	North Dublin	2	2	0	0
	Dublin North Centre	94	6	0	88
	North West Dublin	327	32	17	278
Total		1017	171	156	690

Note: Applications that were placed on hold are not included in this report

5. Applications Overdue to commence Stage 2 on 31st December 2019.

- 1,303 applications due to commence stage 2 by the end of the 4th Quarter, 2019 had not done so.



CHO	LHO	Overdue	<1 month	1 - 3 Months	>3 Months
AREA 1		0	0	0	0
	Cavan/Monaghan	0	0	0	0
	Donegal	0	0	0	0
	Sligo/Leitrim	0	0	0	0
AREA 2		1	0	1	0
	Galway	1	0	1	0
	Mayo	0	0	0	0
	Roscommon	0	0	0	0
AREA 3		2	2	0	0
	Clare	1	1	0	0
	Limerick	1	1	0	0
	Tipperary N.R	0	0	0	0
AREA 4		1	0	0	1
	Kerry	0	0	0	0
	Cork North	1	0	0	1
	Cork North Lee	0	0	0	0
	Cork South Lee	0	0	0	0
	Cork West	0	0	0	0
AREA 5		61	8	15	38
	Carlow/Kilkenny	0	0	0	0
	Tipperary S.R	0	0	0	0
	Waterford	0	0	0	0
	Wexford	61	8	15	38
AREA 6		3	2	0	1
	Dublin South East	0	0	0	0
	Dublin South	0	0	0	0
	Wicklow	3	2	0	1
AREA 7		620	55	88	477
	Dublin South City	6	6	0	0
	Dublin South West	325	22	65	238
	Dublin West	12	10	0	2
	Kildare/West Wicklow	277	17	23	237
AREA 8		44	26	4	14
	Laois/Offaly	16	9	1	6
	Longford/Westmeath	0	0	0	0
	Louth	4	4	0	0
	Meath	24	13	3	8
AREA 9		571	51	111	409
	North Dublin	28	21	4	3
	Dublin North Centre	117	3	23	91
	North West Dublin	426	27	84	315
Total		1303	144	219	940

Note: Applications that were placed on hold are not included in this report

5. Applications Overdue to commence Stage 2 on 31st December 2018.

- 714 applications due to commence stage 2 by the end of the 4th Quarter, 2018 had not done so.



CHO	LHO	Overdue	<1 month	1 - 3 Months	>3 Months
AREA 1		1	1	0	0
	Cavan/Monaghan	0	0	0	0
	Donegal	1	1	0	0
	Sligo/Leitrim	0	0	0	0
AREA 2		0	0	0	0
	Galway	0	0	0	0
	Mayo	0	0	0	0
	Roscommon	0	0	0	0
AREA 3		0	0	0	0
	Clare	0	0	0	0
	Limerick	0	0	0	0
	Tipperary N.R	0	0	0	0
AREA 4		5	4	0	1
	Kerry	0	0	0	0
	Cork North	1	0	0	1
	Cork North Lee	3	3	0	0
	Cork South Lee	1	1	0	0
	Cork West	0	0	0	0
AREA 5		119	4	4	111
	Carlow/Kilkenny	0	0	0	0
	Tipperary S.R	0	0	0	0
	Waterford	0	0	0	0
	Wexford	119	4	4	111
AREA 6		0	0	0	0
	Dublin South East	0	0	0	0
	Dublin South	0	0	0	0
	Wicklow	0	0	0	0
AREA 7		273	31	53	189
	Dublin South City	0	0	0	0
	Dublin South West	113	17	28	68
	Dublin West	1	1	0	0
	Kildare/West Wicklow	159	13	25	121
AREA 8		21	18	3	0
	Laois/Offaly	21	18	3	0
	Longford/Westmeath	0	0	0	0
	Louth	0	0	0	0
	Meath	0	0	0	0
AREA 9		295	29	89	177
	North Dublin	8	7	0	1
	Dublin North Centre	36	1	14	21
	North West Dublin	251	21	75	155
Total		714	87	149	478

Note: Applications that were placed on hold are not included in this report

5. Applications Overdue to commence Stage 2 on 31st December 2017.

- 232 applications due to commence stage 2 by the end of the 4th Quarter, 2017 had not done so.



CHO	LHO	Overdue	<1 month	1 - 3 Months	>3 Months
AREA 1		13	5	8	0
	Cavan/Monaghan	13	5	8	0
	Donegal	0	0	0	0
	Sligo/Leitrim	0	0	0	0
AREA 2		0	0	0	0
	Galway	0	0	0	0
	Mayo	0	0	0	0
	Roscommon	0	0	0	0
AREA 3		0	0	0	0
	Clare	0	0	0	0
	Limerick	0	0	0	0
	Tipperary N.R	0	0	0	0
AREA 4		11	0	2	9
	Kerry	0	0	0	0
	Cork North	1	0	0	1
	Cork North Lee	4	0	0	4
	Cork South Lee	5	0	1	4
	Cork West	1	0	1	0
AREA 5		92	21	45	26
	Carlow/Kilkenny	1	1	0	0
	Tipperary S.R	0	0	0	0
	Waterford	7	0	7	0
	Wexford	84	20	38	26
AREA 6		0	0	0	0
	Dublin South East	0	0	0	0
	Dublin South	0	0	0	0
	Wicklow	0	0	0	0
AREA 7		4	3	1	0
	Dublin South City	1	1	0	0
	Dublin South West	0	0	0	0
	Dublin West	1	0	1	0
	Kildare/West Wicklow	2	2	0	0
AREA 8		23	5	14	4
	Laois/Offaly	3	1	2	0
	Longford/Westmeath	0	0	0	0
	Louth	0	0	0	0
	Meath	20	4	12	4
AREA 9		89	20	21	48
	North Dublin	0	0	0	0
	Dublin North Centre	10	1	0	9
	North West Dublin	79	19	21	39
Total		232	54	91	87

Note: Applications that were placed on hold are not included in this report

Appendix 2

4. Number of Assessment Reports Completed: Quarter 4 2021



'Within timeline' includes those assessments which have been completed within the timeframes set out in the Disability Act 2005 and accompanying Regulations. It also includes those assessments completed within a timeframe which has been extended due to 'exceptional circumstances' as provided for in Paragraph 10 of the Regulations. Reviewed reports are not included in this table.

The average duration of the assessment process per report completed in this quarter was 14.96 months.

CHO	LHO	No Disability	Disability	Total for Qtr.	Within Timeline	% Within Timeline
AREA 1		8	46	54	40	74%
	Cavan/Monaghan	3	29	32	26	81%
	Donegal	4	11	15	9	60%
	Sligo/Leitrim	1	6	7	5	71%
AREA 2		5	27	32	16	50%
	Galway	1	14	15	5	33%
	Mayo	2	8	10	5	50%
	Roscommon	2	5	7	6	86%
AREA 3		11	51	62	46	74%
	Clare	5	20	25	11	44%
	Limerick	0	0	0	0	-
	Tipperary N.R	6	31	37	35	95%
AREA 4		176	234	410	17	4%
	Kerry	41	52	93	8	9%
	Cork North	14	16	30	0	0%
	Cork North Lee	69	72	141	2	1%
	Cork South Lee	47	75	122	5	4%
	Cork West	5	19	24	2	8%
AREA 5		25	43	68	6	9%
	Carlow/Kilkenny	8	4	12	2	17%
	Tipperary S.R	6	20	26	0	0%
	Waterford	5	9	14	4	29%
	Wexford	6	10	16	0	0%
AREA 6		30	69	99	5	5%
	Dublin South East	9	11	20	1	5%
	Dublin South	2	9	11	2	18%
	Wicklow	19	49	68	2	3%
AREA 7		501	98	599	54	9%
	Dublin South City	53	2	55	4	7%
	Dublin South West	194	29	223	28	13%
	Dublin West	127	3	130	10	8%
	Kildare/West Wicklow	127	64	191	12	6%
AREA 8		72	125	197	31	16%
	Laois/Offaly	10	36	46	8	17%
	Longford/Westmeath	10	13	23	10	43%
	Louth	8	8	16	7	44%
	Meath	44	68	112	6	5%
AREA 9		140	488	628	96	15%
	North Dublin	63	282	345	2	1%
	Dublin North Centre	13	31	44	7	16%
	North West Dublin	64	175	239	87	36%
Total		968	1181	2149	311	14%

Appendix 3

7. Service Statements Completed: Quarter 4 2021

This table counts Service Statements dispatched to the applicant during the fourth quarter of 2021. It does not include reviewed or modified service statements. The timeline is calculated from the date the Assessment Report was sent to the



Liaison Officer to the date the Service Statement is dispatched to the applicant. The Statutory Timeline for this process is 1 month.

- 1,112 Service Statements were dispatched to the applicant during this quarter; 41% were dispatched within the 1 month timeline.

CHO	LHO	Total	Within Timeline	% within timeline
AREA 1		59	19	32%
	Cavan/Monaghan	28	4	14%
	Donegal	23	7	30%
	Sligo/Leitrim	8	8	100%
AREA 2		4	4	100%
	Galway	0	0	-
	Mayo	0	0	-
	Roscommon	4	4	100%
AREA 3		118	25	21%
	Clare	22	7	32%
	Limerick	32	0	0%
	Tipperary N.R	64	18	28%
AREA 4		131	13	10%
	Kerry	40	10	25%
	Cork North	26	0	0%
	Cork North Lee	34	1	3%
	Cork South Lee	30	2	7%
	Cork West	1	0	0%
AREA 5		26	2	8%
	Carlow/Kilkenny	1	0	0%
	Tipperary S.R	10	1	10%
	Waterford	6	0	0%
	Wexford	9	1	11%
AREA 6		48	29	60%
	Dublin South East	11	7	64%
	Dublin South	4	1	25%
	Wicklow	33	21	64%
AREA 7		142	24	17%
	Dublin South City	0	0	-
	Dublin South West	109	18	17%
	Dublin West	0	0	-
	Kildare/West Wicklow	33	6	18%
AREA 8		64	32	50%
	Laois/Offaly	0	0	-
	Longford/Westmeath	0	0	-
	Louth	12	11	92%
	Meath	52	21	40%
AREA 9		520	313	60%
	North Dublin	325	134	41%
	Dublin North Centre	21	6	29%
	North West Dublin	174	173	99%
Total		1112	461	41%