



**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>

22<sup>nd</sup> July 2022

Deputy David Cullinane,  
Dail Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.  
E-mail: [david.cullinane@oireachtas.ie](mailto: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 39397/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health the number of children waiting for an assessment of need in 2021 and to the end of June 2022, broken down by month; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**PQ 39393/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health the number of assessments of need carried out by the HSE on children with disabilities in 2020, 2021 and to the end of June 2022, broken down by month in tabular form; 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.

**Table 1 - Applications overdue for completion at end of 2021**

CHO	Total Overdue <sup>1</sup>	Overdue/ Exceptional Circumstances <sup>2</sup>	Overdue/ No Exceptional Circumstances
AREA 1	36	9	27
AREA 2	21	1	20
AREA 3	37	21	16
AREA 4	711	56	655
AREA 5	90	10	80
AREA 6	65	5	60



AREA 7	176	0	176
AREA 8	203	9	194
AREA 9	647	82	565
Total	1986	193	1793

**Table 2 - Applications overdue for completion – at end Quarter 2 2022**

CHO	Overdue <sup>1</sup>	Overdue/ Exceptional Circumstances <sup>2</sup>	Overdue/ No Exceptional Circumstances
AREA 1	156	5	151
AREA 2	48	1	47
AREA 3	87	0	87
AREA 4	587	64	523
AREA 5	123	1	122
AREA 6	115	1	114
AREA 7	452	0	452
AREA 8	236	2	234
AREA 9	727	10	717
Total	2531	84	2447

<sup>1</sup>All assessment reports that were not completed within 6 months of application or within 3 months of Start Stage 2 and before the end of the quarter are included in this report.

<sup>2</sup>The number of Assessment Reports 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. Consent to extension is only valid if agreed extension date has not already passed.

Table 3 below provides information on the number of assessments of need under the Disability Act, 2005, carried out by the HSE on children with disabilities in 2020, 2021 and to the end of June 2022, broken down by quarter in tabular form.

Number of AONs Carried out	Q1 2020	Q2 2020	Q3 2020	Q4 2020	Q1 2021	Q2 2021	Q3 2021	Q4 2021	Q1 2022	Q2 2022
	848	770	666	1627	2693	1268	2243	2149	1719	455

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 was as a result of additional funding allocated to the Assessment of Need (AON) process via Slaintecare, which was utilised to provide additional assessments through a range of options including overtime for existing staff and private procurement. The total number of overdue AONs reduced by 72% since this additional funding was allocated.

However, a High Court judgement delivered on 11th March 2022 has impacted on the completion of assessments since that date. As a consequence of the judgement, Assessment Officers cannot complete assessments based on the agreed Preliminary Team Assessment format. As a result, activity for the second quarter of 2022 indicates that there has been a decrease in the number of Assessment of Need Reports completed during the period. This has led to an increase in the total number of applications 'overdue for completion', which now stands at 2,447 (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 requirement to provide diagnostic assessments under the terms of the Act for children who applied for their AONs between January 2020 and December 2021 will further impact on compliance in the coming months.

Yours sincerely,

*Bernard O'Regan*

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

