



**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.

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5<sup>th</sup> August 2022

Deputy John Brady,  
Dail Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.  
E-mail: [john.brady@oireachtas.ie](mailto:john.brady@oireachtas.ie)

Dear Deputy Brady,

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: 41408/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health the number of applications received for a physical care needs assessment for each of the years 2019 to 2021 broken down by county in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter*

**PQ: 41409/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health the number awaiting a physical care needs assessment in 2021 broken down by county in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**PQ: 41410/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health the number awaiting a clinical assessment in 2021, broken down by waiting list timeframe per county outlining the wait time such as one month, three months, six months, twelve months and greater than twelve months in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**HSE Response**

The Department of Health suggests that the Parliamentary questions concern Assessments of Need under the Disability Act (2005) and that PQ 41410/22 concerns 2022.

Since Part 2 of 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.

Please see Table 1 for the number of applications received for Assessment of Need in each CHO Area for the years 2019 to 2021. Table 2 gives the number overdue an Assessment of Need at end of 2021 and Table 3 gives the most recent information regarding applications overdue for completion – at end Quarter 2 2022.



**Table 1: Assessment of Need Applications received**

CHO	2019	2020	2021
<b>Totals</b>	<b>6,596</b>	<b>4,674</b>	<b>5,899</b>

**Table 2 - 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
<b>Total</b>	<b>1986</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>1793</b>

**Table 3 - 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
<b>Total</b>	<b>2531</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>2447</b>

<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.

It is acknowledged that the numbers of assessments overdue for completion remain high.

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'.

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 HSE's Preliminary Team Assessment format. This has impacted significantly on the numbers of AONs overdue for completion

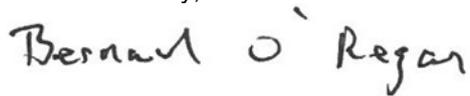


The HSE are continuing to review the files of all children who received a preliminary team assessment and engaging directly with families to establish what additional assessments will be required to meet the requirements of the Act. Additional funding has been secured to support the additional assessments required.

The HSE's Clinical Programme for People with Disability in cooperation with Community Operations, Disability Services will implement a process over the coming weeks for a revised approach to Assessment of Need. In developing this clinical guidance, the HSE has engaged with a wide range of stakeholders, including families, service providers, staff and representative bodies in an intensive consultation to develop a pathway for AONs that seeks to comply with the requirements of the Act but also protects the commitment to the provision of intervention.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bernard O'Regan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a distinct loop for the letter 'O'.

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

