



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>

17th June 2022

Deputy Denise Mitchell,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail:
Denise.mitchell@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Mitchell,

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 30788/22

To ask the Minister for Health if children who received a preliminary team assessment or an assessment of need prior to the 15 January 2020 will require reassessment; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

PQ 30789/22

To ask the Minister for Health if assessment of needs have been frozen in any CHO; if so, if he will provide details of the particular CHOs; if waiting lists have been frozen to reflect this; if not, if children are being called for appointments and then being removed and having to reapply as a result; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

HSE Response

Preliminary team assessment

The HSE's Standard Operating Procedure for Assessment of Need was implemented for all new applications for AON from 15th January 2020. Since then, approximately 10,000 Preliminary Team Assessments have been completed. The HSE is currently reviewing these files and will engage directly with these families to establish if they wish to receive a further assessment under the terms of the Disability Act. Figures for 2021 indicate that 4,951 Preliminary Team Assessments were provided under the terms of the SOP during that year. 86% of the children who received these assessments were referred for interventions on the basis of their PTA. Only 54% of children who received a Preliminary Team Assessment in 2021 were identified as requiring further assessment. This requirement did not delay their access to intervention. This cohort of children will be prioritised for completion of their AONs.

Community Healthcare Organisations have reported the following PTA activity for 2021:

	Total PTA Activity 2021				
	No. of PTAs completed	No. referred for intervention	% referred for intervention	No. referred for further	% referred for further Ax



CHO	Ax				
	Referrals	Assessments	Referrals for Intervention	Referrals for Further Assessment	Referrals for Further Assessment %
CHO1	366	356	97%	309	84%
CHO2	132	130	98%	121	92%
CHO3	375	242	65%	330	88%
CHO4	554	542	98%	252	45%
CHO5	139	138	99%	84	60%
CHO6	207	155	75%	111	54%
CHO7	1407	1300	92%	551	39%
CHO8	719	490	68%	411	57%
CHO9	1052	884	84%	511	49%
	4951	4237	86%	2680	54%

While this data indicates that there is substantial variation in outcomes across the 9 CHO areas, 86% of children are being referred for intervention on the basis of these assessments. This represents a significant improvement in the pathway to intervention for children and their families. The variance in the proportion of children referred for further assessment will be examined as part of the AON review.

Further to the judgement of Ms Justice S Phelan in the case of CTM and JA v. HSE, the HSE has established a group to develop a revised approach to Assessment of Need under the Disability Act 2005. Separately, a plan is being developed to address the needs of those children who received a Preliminary Team Assessment (PTA) and who may need additional diagnostic assessments.

In the interim, the PTA approach as defined in the HSE's Standard Operating Procedure for Assessment of Need can no longer be utilised to fulfil our obligations under the Act. A memo has issued to all stakeholders to this effect. Where AONs have been scheduled with children these appointments should be utilised as the first step in the child's Assessment of Need. It is acknowledged that additional appointments may be required. Assessment Officers have also been asked not to issue any final Assessment of Need Reports based on PTAs.

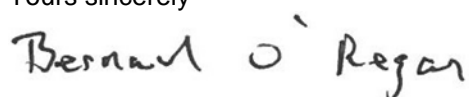
In this regard, assessment of Need reports will no longer be issued on the basis of a Preliminary Team Assessment. Where appointments have already been scheduled with children, these will form the first step in their AON process.

It should be noted that each preliminary team assessment was provided by appropriate members of a multidisciplinary team. The outcome of the recent High Court case requires the HSE to provide a diagnostic assessment where necessary.

The HSE are reviewing 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. Plans to address these needs will be finalised in the coming weeks. There has been no suggestion that Assessment of Need has been suspended.

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 need

Yours sincerely



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

