



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>

8th April 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 16034/22

To ask the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question No. 762 of 1 March 2022, when the software company which provided maintenance and technical support for the assessment officers' system database ceased to provide such services; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

PQ 16035/22

To ask the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question No.762 of 1 March 2022, when it was first reported or flagged that the AOS database system was not for purpose and has not had the necessary upgrades or technical changes required; the years in which services were sought to upgrade the database; the number of times the database has been upgraded since its inception; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

HSE Response

The Assessment Officers' System Database (AOS) was developed in 2007 to facilitate the case management, planning and reporting of assessments and services to children with a disability eligible to apply for an assessment under the Disability Act, 2005.

The AOS was developed by a small software development company based in Dublin, as a modified version of an earlier database designed in 2003 as a caseload system used to manage the HSE's Occupational Guidance, Rehabilitative Training and Work/Like work service (OGS). The HSE had an annual maintenance contract with this company to ensure that both systems were maintained and supported so that technical problems could be resolved quickly and necessary upgrades facilitated. However, the company was taken over by a large multinational company in 2016 and ceased to support the AOS and the OGS.

Prior to this, the HSE was engaging with the original provider to upgrade both systems to ensure compatibility with external software applications that the databases relied on to run successfully, such as JAVA, Internet Explorer and Windows Operating System. The AOS system also required upgrading in relation to reporting functions, particularly in the areas of Assessment of Need Reviews. However, following the take over, this upgrade was no longer an option for the HSE.



At this time, the HSE was also engaged in a reconfiguration of existing therapy resources to geographic based teams for children (0-18 years) - the Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People (0-18s) Programme. The objective of the new model of assessment and intervention was to provide one clear referral pathway for all children (0-18s), irrespective of their disability, where they live or the school they attend. The transition to this service delivery model was governed by a consultation and engagement process with all stakeholders, including service users and their families, and was being implemented on a phased basis.

The intention was to roll out an integrated care model that would allow children, whatever the nature of their disability, to be seen as locally to their home and school as possible; at primary care level when their needs could be met there and by a network specialist interdisciplinary team if their needs were more complex. The primary and network teams would be supported as appropriate by specialist support services with a high level of expertise in particular fields.

The HSE believed that the above measures would have a positive impact on the provision of clinical services for all children requiring access to health related supports; that is, based on the NDA's research findings, it was expected that this re-configuration of services would have a significant impact on our ability to meet the needs of children and young people in a more efficient, effective and equitable manner and, in particular, on our ability to comply with the statutory time-frames set out in the Disability Act and the accompanying regulations.

In this context, it was felt that a new integrated Management Information System for children's disability services would need to be developed, which would include a module on the Assessment of Need process under the Disability Act. This would replace the AOS and facilitate the HSE to provide a wide range of reports on AON activity.

In 2021, the HSE established 91 Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) to provide services and supports for all children with complex needs within a defined geographic area. A National Management Information System for all 91 CDNTs is in development and will include a module on the Assessment of Need process under the Disability Act, 2005.

The HSE have now signed a contract, following a procurement process via etenders, to provide the Children's Disability Network Team Information Management System to all 91 teams.

To ensure maximum data security, cloud hosting enabling works are currently underway during the month of April 2022 for the build of the development, testing, training and live production environment with the HSE's Cloud hosting partner Eir Evo.

The successful vendor with whom the HSE have signed the contract, following the aforementioned tender process, will then commence a seven month software development, testing, migration and training programme, before rolling out the Children's Disability Network Team Information Management System to all 91 teams across the country on a phased basis over the following nine months.

The AON module is scheduled for phase one of the rollout process, subject to works on the existing AON data in the interim period to allow its aging structures to be updated for migration to the Children's Disability Network Team Information Management System.

Yours sincerely



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

