



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>

27th July 2023

Deputy Roisin Shortall,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: roisin.shortall@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Shortall,

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

PQ 35378/23

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the average wait time for an assessment of need for children who have been added to the assessment of need waiting list, by children's disability network team; the average wait time for an assessment of need for children who have not been added to the assessment of need waiting list but were referred to a children's disability network team through another pathway (details supplied), by children's disability network team; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -

Details supplied: Examples of other pathways include a GP or public health nurse

HSE Response

The National Policy on Access to Services for Children & Young People with Disability and 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 and adults with a disability who have support needs can be effectively supported within mainstream child and adult 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 do not require a diagnosis or an Assessment of Need as defined by the Disability Act (2005) in order to access a CDNT service. They can be referred by a healthcare professional or parent/carer to the CDNT for children with complex needs as a result of their disability, or to Primary Care for children with non complex needs.

91 Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) are aligned to 96 Community Healthcare Networks (CHNs) across the country and are providing services and supports for children with complex disabilities aged from birth to 18 years of age.



Parents may refer their children directly to Primary Care or to Children’s Disability Network Teams (CDNT) by completing the relevant referral forms. A GP referral is required for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, (CAMHS). Parents do not need to provide any professional reports to access health services. When families have reports available from health, social care or education professionals, these will be considered by the services. This will include where appropriate, consideration of the outcome of the assessment, the assessment tools used and the professionals involved in the assessment.

Regardless of the nature of their disability, where they live, or the school they attend, every child with complex needs and their families have access to a range of family centred services and supports of their CDNT according to their individual needs. This includes evidence based universal, targeted and specialist supports, such as individual therapeutic intervention and access to specialist consultation and assessment when needed.

The CDNTs are currently providing care and therapy for over 46,000 children and strategies and supports for urgent cases on the waitlist where staffing resources.

Children referred by parents or professionals to CDNT or Primary Care services are not added to the AON waiting list under the Disability Act 2005. As mentioned above, children with complex needs and their families awaiting CDNT targeted supports, including assessment and interventions, are offered evidence informed universal strategies based on individual needs and available staffing resources.

CDNTs, in line with national PDS policy, offers services based on the child’s individual needs and family priorities as identified in the child’s Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) through a family centre practice model.

This model of service ensures that the supports provided are determined from family priorities, taking into account the factors relevant to each child. It recognises that each family has its own role, values, structures, beliefs and coping styles and it aims to strengthen families own abilities in dealing with their child’s challenges. This approach is supported by national and international best practice.

Assessment of Need

The Disability Act (2005) provides a legislated right to an Assessment of Need (AON) that outlines the health and education needs for people born on or after 1st June 2002 who are suspected of having a disability, but does not include a legislated right to service provision as an outcome of that AON.

6,755 applications for AON were received in 2022. This was the highest number of applications received in any year since Part 2 of the Act was commenced in June 2007.

Information regarding Assessment of Need is reported on Quarterly basis. The table below gives information regarding the number overdue for completion and the length of time over due at the end of Quarter 2 2023.

Table 1: Applications overdue for completion

Of the 6,495 applications that are overdue, 4,972 (77%) are overdue for longer than 3 months.

CHO	LHO	Overdue	<1 month	1 - 3 Months	>3 Months
AREA 1		304	20	85	199
AREA 2		87	11	21	55
AREA 3		328	13	41	274
AREA 4		706	45	99	562
AREA 5		328	21	53	254
AREA 6		417	45	97	275
AREA 7		1986	110	280	1596



AREA 8	433	52	113	268
AREA 9	1906	131	286	1489
Total	6495	448	1075	4972

Assessment of Need under the Disability Act (2005) are carried out in chronological order based upon date of receipt of completed application.

National Information Management System for the CDNTs (CDNTIMS)

Historically the number of children waitlisted for children's disability services provided by section 38 and section 39 providers has not been available nationally.

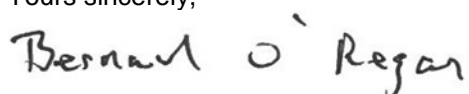
The establishment of CDNTs in 2021 has facilitated the collection of this data. A National Management Information System for all 91 CDNTs is being rolled out and when implemented, will provide current data on waiting lists and other details for all CDNTs. In the interim, manual data collection is on-going and will provide information to the local areas regarding the number of children waiting for each CDNT.

As historical data is not available, the table below is the most recent data available. This shows the number of children that are waiting for an initial contact with a CDNT in the 9 CHO Areas. This Dataset represents end of June 2023 activity reports.

Status report	CHO 1	CHO 2	CHO 3	CHO 4	CHO 5	CHO 6	CHO 7	CHO 8	CHO 9
No of children waiting 0-3 months for an initial contact @month end	698	154	346	121	161	99	155	433	86
No of children waiting 4-6 months for an initial contact @month end	232	181	258	119	130	92	151	374	67
No of children waiting 6-12 months for an initial contact @month end	340	149	294	222	272	226	459	542	268
No of children waiting over 12 months for an initial contact @month end	350	465	386	1096	1424	863	1825	1076	2408

Please also note that this is an interim dataset as we await the roll out of the National Information Management System and some individual CDNTs indicate that they do not have a system in place to capture this level of activity, therefore there are gaps in data returns for some of the CHO Areas.

Yours sincerely,



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

