



15th March 2023

Ms. Verona Murphy TD
Dail Eireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ 12016/23

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the number of children in County Wexford currently awaiting an assessment of need; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Murphy,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which was submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

I have reviewed the matter and the following is the current position.

Since the commencement of Part 2 of the Disability Act in June 2007 the HSE has endeavoured to meet its legislative requirements as set out in the Act.

The Disability Act 2005 outlines the statutory timelines under which AONs must be completed. In effect the assessment must be completed within six months of the application date with a further month to issue the report and service statement.

The numbers of applications for AON under the Act have risen steadily since its implementation in June 2007. When originally implemented, it was envisaged that AON would apply to children aged less than five years and the Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (2004) (EPSEN) would address the needs of older children. The relevant sections of the EPSEN Act have not been commenced.

There have been significant year on year increases in the number of children applying for assessments which has led to delays in accessing this support. It is acknowledged that given the increased referral rates and demand for assessments there is a requirement for additional resources to meet current demand. South East Community Healthcare (SECH) has secured some funding to assist with this waiting list and SECH are currently developing teams to carry out assessments.

I have been advised there are 169+ applicants awaiting Assessment of Need in County Wexford at this time. Please be advised that following a High Court Ruling in March of 2022 that no assessments, other than those that were court ordered, were completed for a period of more than 6 months due to Trade Union instruction.

Currently SECH are working on a plan to address the waiting list for assessment of need.



I trust this information is of assistance to you. Should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Anne Ennis', written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Ms. Anne Ennis
Head of Service, Disability Service
South East Community Healthcare