



**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>

4<sup>th</sup> April 2023

Deputy David Cullinane,  
Dail Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.  
E-mail: [david.cullinane@oireachtas.ie](mailto: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 question, which was submitted to this department for response.

**PQ: 12411/23**

*To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the number of children on waiting lists for an assessment of needs for January and February 2019-2023, inclusive, in tabular form; and the number overdue for completion; the average length of wait.*

**HSE Response**

The Disability Act (2005) provides for an Assessment of Need (AON) that outlines the health and education needs for people born on or after 1<sup>st</sup> June 2002 who are suspected of having a disability.

The numbers of applications for AON under the Act have risen steadily since its implementation in June 2007. 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.

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 2022, this figure averaged 55%. This is a reflection that the AON process is an accumulative process in terms of numbers of children seeking access.

Please see tables 1 to 4 provided in the Appendix. Assessment of Need reports are available on a Quarterly basis, these tables are taken from the Quarter 1 (January, February, March) Assessment of Need report for each year 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022.

The Quarter 1 Assessment of Need Report for 2023 will not be available until later in April 2023.

The judgement of Ms Justice S Phelan in the case of CTM & JA v the HSE found that the Preliminary Team Assessment approach described in the HSE's Standard Operating Procedure for Assessment of Need does not meet the requirements of the Disability Act. This judgement in effect requires the HSE to deliver diagnostic assessments where necessary and appropriate as part of the Assessment of Need process. This ruling has a



significant impact operationally and has resulted in a growth in the numbers of overdue Assessments of Need. The requirement for services to prioritise the statutory Assessment of Need process will also impact significantly on their capacity to provide necessary intervention / treatment for children with disabilities.


The HSE is 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.

Approximately €11m has been allocated to address waiting lists for clinical assessments identified through the Assessment of Need process. This funding will be utilised to procure diagnostic ASD assessments from the private sector. A successful procurement process will facilitate the Children's Disability Network Teams to focus on the provision of intervention for children on their caseloads.

The HSE's National Clinical Programme for People with Disability (NCPPD) has led the process of developing Interim Clinical Guidance to replace the Preliminary Team Assessment. This new Interim Clinical Guidance has now been clinically approved and will be implemented following approval by the Department of Health.

The HSE is committed to the delivery of appropriate services for children with disabilities and working with families and staff to develop services that meet their needs. It is important to note that children do not require an Assessment of Need to access health services and parents may refer their child directly to their local Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT).

Yours Sincerely,



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



## Appendix

**Table 1**

### Applications overdue for completion - End of Quarter 1, 2019

Of the 3,686 applications that are overdue, 2,830 (77%) are overdue for longer than 3 months. Months overdue are calculated based on the statutory timelines of 3 months from start stage 2 and no more than 6 months from the application date. This overdue figure does not include applications that have been put on hold, are closed or are ineligible for Assessment.

CHO	Overdue	<1 month	1 - 3 Months	>3 Months
AREA 1	103	15	4	84
AREA 2	44	12	16	16
AREA 3	352	52	76	224
AREA 4	978	69	123	786
AREA 5	404	18	13	373
AREA 6	117	18	28	71
AREA 7	478	33	54	391
AREA 8	473	49	57	367
AREA 9	737	63	156	518
<b>Total</b>	<b>3686</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>527</b>	<b>2830</b>

**Table 2**

### Applications overdue for completion - End of Quarter 1, 2020

Of the 5,083 applications that are overdue, 3,682 (72%) are overdue for longer than 3 months. Months overdue are calculated based on the statutory timelines of 3 months from start stage 2 and no more than 6 months from the application date. This overdue figure does not include applications that have been put on hold, are closed or are ineligible for Assessment.

CHO	Overdue	<1 month	1 - 3 Months	>3 Months
AREA 1	149	63	26	60
AREA 2	112	33	42	37
AREA 3	598	82	121	395
AREA 4	879	119	124	636
AREA 5	468	30	49	389
AREA 6	217	39	47	131
AREA 7	751	60	105	586
AREA 8	677	76	95	506
AREA 9	1232	75	215	942
<b>Total</b>	<b>5083</b>	<b>577</b>	<b>824</b>	<b>3682</b>



**Table 3****Applications overdue for completion - End of Quarter 1, 2021**

Of the 3,503 applications that are overdue, 2,915 (83%) are overdue for longer than 3 months. Months overdue are calculated based on the statutory timelines of 3 months from start stage 2 and no more than 6 months from the application date. This overdue figure does not include applications that have been put on hold, are closed or are ineligible for Assessment.

<b>CHO</b>	<b>Overdue</b>	<b>&lt;1 month</b>	<b>1 - 3 Months</b>	<b>&gt;3 Months</b>
<b>AREA 1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>AREA 2</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>AREA 3</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>178</b>
<b>AREA 4</b>	<b>903</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>738</b>
<b>AREA 5</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>229</b>
<b>AREA 6</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>AREA 7</b>	<b>735</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>588</b>
<b>AREA 8</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>212</b>
<b>AREA 9</b>	<b>1016</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>900</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>3503</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>2915</b>

**Table 4****Applications overdue for completion - End of Quarter 1, 2022**

Of the 1,718 applications that are overdue, 1,113 (65%) are overdue for longer than 3 months. Months overdue are calculated based on the statutory timelines of 3 months from start stage 2 and no more than 6 months from the application date. This overdue figure does not include applications that have been put on hold, are closed or are ineligible for Assessment.

<b>CHO</b>	<b>Overdue</b>	<b>&lt;1 month</b>	<b>1 - 3 Months</b>	<b>&gt;3 Months</b>
<b>AREA 1</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>AREA 2</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>AREA 3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>AREA 4</b>	<b>566</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>472</b>
<b>AREA 5</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>AREA 6</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>AREA 7</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>AREA 8</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>AREA 9</b>	<b>529</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>342</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1718</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>1113</b>

