



Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,
31-33 Sráid Chaitríona, Luimneach.

Office of the Head of Operations,
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6th June 2023

Deputy Michael Moynihan,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: michael.moynihan@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Moynihan,

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

PQ: 24925/23

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the number of children as of 1 May 2023 or the latest date available that were awaiting a first assessment from the HSE under the 2005 Disability Act, for each LHO area, in tabular form.

HSE Response

The Assessment of Need process is set out in the [Disability Act, 2005](#). The aim of an Assessment of Need under the Disability Act is to identify whether a person has a disability, the nature and extent of the disability, any health and education needs arising from that disability, as well as what services are required to meet those needs.

The numbers of applications for AON under the Act have risen steadily since its implementation in June 2007. 7144 applications for AON were received in the most recent 4 quarters (Q2, 2022 – Q1 2023). This was the highest number of applications received in any 12 month period 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 persons born after 1st June 2002 who are suspected of having a disability, 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 and young people seeking access.

A High Court judgement delivered on 11th March 2022 has impacted on the completion of assessments since that date. As a consequence of the judgement, Assessment Officers cannot complete assessments based on the agreed Preliminary Team Assessment format. As a result, activity for the first quarter of 2023 indicates that there has been an increase in the total number of applications 'overdue for completion', which now stands at 5,484 (including 180 applications for which an extended time-frame was negotiated with the parent on the grounds of there being exceptional circumstances as provided for in paragraph 10 of the regulations).

Please see the table below which gives the number of Assessments overdue at the end of Quarter 1 2023. Assessment of Need Reports are reported on Quarterly and this is the most recent information.



Applications over due for completion

CHO	LHO	Overdue	<1 month	1 - 3 Months	>3 Months
AREA 1		241	40	38	163
	Cavan/Monaghan	105	28	19	58
	Donegal	126	9	16	101
	Sligo/Leitrim	10	3	3	4
AREA 2		74	13	14	47
	Galway	41	10	7	24
	Mayo	27	3	2	22
	Roscommon	6	0	5	1
AREA 3		298	21	33	244
	Clare	39	4	4	31
	Limerick	175	11	14	150
	Tipperary N.R	84	6	15	63
AREA 4		732	59	93	580
	Kerry	42	3	5	34
	Cork North	120	8	23	89
	Cork North Lee	377	33	41	303
	Cork South Lee	172	12	21	139
	Cork West	21	3	3	15
AREA 5		260	21	32	207
	Carlow/Kilkenny	44	2	6	36
	Tipperary S.R	40	3	4	33
	Waterford	46	8	12	26
	Wexford	130	8	10	112
AREA 6		334	47	59	228
	Dublin South East	37	8	5	24
	Dublin South	98	21	12	65
	Wicklow	199	18	42	139
AREA 7		1630	126	232	1272
	Dublin South City	138	13	23	102
	Dublin South West	508	35	70	403
	Dublin West	470	33	68	369
	Kildare/West Wicklow	514	45	71	398
AREA 8		375	50	76	249
	Laois/Offaly	116	12	15	89
	Longford/Westmeath	41	9	14	18
	Louth	58	11	16	31
	Meath	160	18	31	111
AREA 9		1540	126	198	1216
	North Dublin	964	116	97	751
	Dublin North Centre	74	1	17	56
	North West Dublin	502	9	84	409
Total		5484	503	775	4206

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. Additional funding has been secured to support the additional assessments required. Some assessments have been procured from the private sector and further procurement is planned.



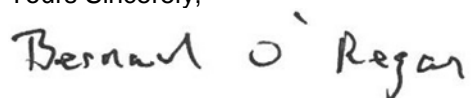
Approximately €11m has been allocated to address waiting lists for clinical assessments identified through the Assessment of Need process. This funding will be utilised to procure diagnostic ASD assessments from the private sector. A successful procurement process will facilitate the Children's Disability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

In parallel, a large scale international procurement process is also being progressed.

In addition, the HSE at local level uses time related savings from time to time to source AON assessments privately for children in the order as registered on the AOS (AON information management system). In such instances, the HSE ensures that the contracted providers are appropriately qualified and that any assessments or interventions are provided in line with the appropriate standards, appropriate procurement procedures, Garda vetting and due diligence practice.

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**

