

14th February 2024

Deputy Violet Anne Wynne
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

Email: [Violet Anne Wynne@oireachtas.ie](mailto:Violet.Anne.Wynne@oireachtas.ie)

Re: PQ/43163/23

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the extent of the waiting list for children requiring assessments of need in County Clare; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Wynne

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above parliamentary question, which you submitted to the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth.

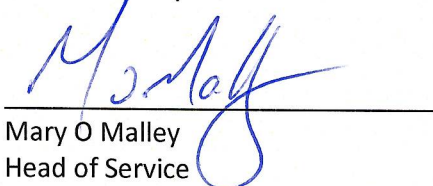
There are currently 501 Children in the Mid-West awaiting Assessment of Need (AON) of which 68 are from County Clare. These high numbers are a direct result of the High Court Ruling of March 2022 which deemed that the Preliminary Team Assessment did not meet the criteria under the Disability Act 2005. This has resulted in a significant number of assessments requiring reassessment or further Autism assessment, in order to fulfil the requirement of the AON, leading to the development of this significant backlog. This backlog is managed centrally at Mid-West level in chronological order (from date of referral) to ensure equity of AON provision.

In order to address the waiting list and deal with the impact of the significant number of AON on the capacity of Children's Disability Network teams (CDNTs) to provide therapeutic intervention, the decision was taken by the Mid-West Children's Disability Networks Governance Group to develop a dedicated resource to manage AON assessments referred to all CDNTs in the Mid-West. It was agreed to allocate four new development posts to an AON Pathway Team, which is solely dedicated to the completion of AON assessments. To date, the service provider has only been in a position to recruit two of the four posts to the Mid-West AON Pathway Team.

Once-off funding was made available to support AON and we continue to engage with external providers to maximise their capacity to complete AON assessments but are experiencing difficulty in accessing suitably qualified providers.

I trust this clarifies the situation but should you require any further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely



Mary O Malley
Head of Service
Mid-West Disability Services |
HSE Mid-West Community Healthcare