



Mari O'Donovan,
Interim Head of Service,
Cúram Príomhúil
FSS an Iardheiscirt

Áras na Ceachan,
Páirc Ghnó agus Teicneolaíochta,
Bóthar na Modh Feirme,
Corcaigh. T12 XHT4

Mari O'Donovan,
Interim Head of Service,
Primary Care
HSE South West

Caha House,
Business and Technology Park,
Model Farm Road,
Cork. T12 XHT4

southwest.hse.ie
E: Mari.ODonovan@hse.ie

7th April, 2025

Ms. Marie Sherlock., T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ ref 15075/25

"To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the current wait times for a child to receive an initial assessment for autism in the Cork city HSE area.

Dear Deputy Sherlock,

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 Health for response.

Children can access autism assessments from either Primary Care or from Disability Services depending on the complexity of their presenting needs. Children are allocated to the appropriate service for assessment based on the information provided at the time of referral. Children with less complex needs access services via Primary Care while those with complex disability needs access children's Disability Services.

Disability Services

Disability services in this region have implemented a waiting list initiative to facilitate children to access appropriate assessments as quickly as possible. At the end of February 2025, the average waiting time for an assessment was 11.75 months from the time of referral to the provision of the final assessment report. This includes children who require an ASD assessment.

Primary Care Services

Children referred for an autism assessment are placed on a waiting list. All referrals are reviewed in advance of assessment for eligibility by designated clinicians and if appropriate the child will be offered an appointment for assessment.

The current waiting time for an autism assessment in Primary Care Services is approximately 30 months from the date the referral was received.

Primary Care Service, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare provide autism assessments for children with non-complex needs via outsourced private provision. The present capacity available from private providers is a limiting factor and the 30 month waiting time has arisen due to vacancies and recruitment challenges in the private providers of autism diagnostic assessments for Primary Care Services.

I acknowledge that this timeframe for such a service is less than desirable, and I apologise for same.

We are presently scoping additional private providers to aid the increased demand for such services. Efforts to increase resources throughout and reduce waiting times are indeed our top priority.

If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Seirbhís sláinte a thógáil a bhfuil ár bpobal bródúil aisti
Building a health service our community is proud of



Mari O'Donovan
Interim Head of Service - Primary Care,
HSE South West