



**Oifig an Stiúrthóir Cúnta Náisiúnta,  
Foireann Míchumais Náisiúnta, An Chéad**  
Urlár - Oifigí 13, 14, 15, Áras Phlásóg na Rós,  
Coimpléasc Gnó na hOllscoile, Páirc  
Náisiúnta Teicneolaíochta, Caladh an  
Treoigh, Luimneach

**Office of the Assistant National  
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28<sup>th</sup> May 2025

Deputy Darren O Rourke,  
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**PQ: 20543/25**

*To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth further to Parliamentary Question 674 of 1 April 2025, and with regards the 30.3% of AONs completed in 2024 that indicated 'No Disability' in accordance with the Disability Act, 2005, the percentage of those that were subsequently diagnosed with autism; and if she will make a statement on the matter.*

Dear Deputy O Rourke,

Thank you for your Parliamentary Question referenced above, which has been forwarded to me for direct reply.

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 Disability Act outlines the statutory timelines under which Assessments of Need under the Act must be completed. In summary, the assessment report must be completed within 6 months of the date the application was received. While the HSE endeavours to meet its legislative obligations under the Act, it has struggled to achieve compliance with these timeframes. In Q1 2025, 7% of assessments were completed within the timeframes set out in the Disability Act 2005 and accompanying Regulations.

The total number of applications 'overdue for completion' at end of Q1 2025, now stands at 15,296 (including 1,055 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) – which represents an increase of an 8% on the end 2024 figure of 14,221. This is largely due to the following:

The table below, was provided in previous PQ response. It provides summary details of the number of AONs completed each year with the percentage of those that indicated 'No Disability' in accordance with the Disability Act, 2005.

**Table 1**

	No	Yes	Total	% of No
<b>Total 2024</b>	1261	2901	<b>4162</b>	<b>30.30%</b>
<b>Total 2023</b>	849	2356	<b>3205</b>	<b>26.49%</b>



Total 2022	1013	2058	3071	33.00%
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At the end of Quarter 1 2025, 368 completed assessments indicated No Disability out of 1402 completed assessments, representing 26%.

The percentage of AONs completed in 2024 that indicated 'No Disability' in accordance with the Disability Act, 2005, that were subsequently diagnosed with autism, is not collated. However it is important to note that in the event of a determination of 'No Disability', the applicant would be referred on to any necessary health services, as appropriate. In addition, a determination that a person does not meet the definition of disability under the Act does not affect access to any health services deemed necessary. When the Assessment Report is complete, the Assessment Officer will contact the parents with a view to clarifying the next steps in the process.

### Complaints procedure

The Disability Act (2005) provides for a complaints and redress process. In the first instance, applicants can make a complaint in relation to one or more of the following:

- a) a determination by the assessment officer concerned that he or she does not have a disability;
- b) the fact, if it be the case, that the assessment under *section 9* was not commenced within the time specified in *section 9(5)* or was not completed without undue delay;
- c) the fact, if it be the case, that the assessment under *section 9* was not conducted in a manner that conforms to the standards determined by a body referred to in *section 10*;
- d) the contents of the service statement provided to the applicant;
- e) the fact, if it be the case, that the Executive or the education service provider, as the case may be, failed to provide or to fully provide a service specified in the service statement.

The Disability Act complaints officers are independent of the AON offices and can be contacted on 045 880400 or [aon.complaints@hse.ie](mailto:aon.complaints@hse.ie).

As specified in the Act, the Disability Act Appeals Officer is appointed by the Minister for Health and can be contacted on 1800 211583 or [appeal@odao.ie](mailto:appeal@odao.ie).

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Since taking office, Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Norma Foley, and Minister of State for Disability, Hildegard Naughton, have held meetings with both disability stakeholders and therapists from the HSE and Lead Agencies in order to better understand the challenges that face children's disability services across the country, including the current situation regarding Assessments of Need.

Yours Sincerely,

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Dr. Aoife O'Donohue,  
Stiúrthóir Náisiúnta Cúntóir, Seirbhísí Mhíchumas, Rochtain agus Imeascadh,  
Assistant National Director, Disability Services, Transformation & Programme Coordination,  
Access & Integration