



**6<sup>th</sup> February 2025**

Mr Rory Hearne, TD,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2

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**PQ 2386/25** *"To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the average waiting time for a child to receive an assessment of need in the period after they have received an initial contact from a CDNT, by CDNT in CHO9 and age category; the number of children waiting less than three months, between three to six months, between six to nine months, and more than nine months for an assessment of need in the period after they have received an initial contact by a CDNT, by CDNT in CHO9 and age category, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter."* – **Rory Hearne, TD**

Dear Deputy Hearne,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you with information in the context of the above Parliamentary Question which you submitted for response. I examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

The Assessment of Need (AON) application and process is aligned to the Disability Act 2005. An AON is not required for children to access health services. There are many children awaiting completion of an AON who are not linked with a CDNT but may be linked with services such as primary care or child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) dependant on the child's individual needs.

The Disability Act (2005) provides for an Assessment of Need (AON) that outlines the health and education needs for people born on or after 1st June 2002 who may have a disability as defined by the Act. The HSE's Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Assessment of Need (AON) was implemented for all new applications for AON from 15th January 2020. This SOP included a standardised approach to assessment which was described as a Preliminary Team Assessment (PTA). The aim of an AON under the Disability Act is to identify whether a person has a disability as defined by the Act.

A High Court judgement of 11<sup>th</sup> March 2022, found that the PTA approach under the current Standard Operating Procedure for AON, did not fulfil the requirements of the Disability Act 2005.

The HSE's National Clinical Programme for People with Disability (NCPPD) led the process of developing Interim Clinical Guidance to replace the PTA. IHA DNC and IHA DNCW are continuing to review the thousands of files of all children who received a PTA and engaging directly with families to establish what additional assessments are required if any to meet the requirements of the Act. This process is nearing completion.

Concurrently IHA DNC & IHA DNCW continues to receive high numbers of new applications for AON with 1699 new applications alone received in 2024.

A Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT) provides specialised support and services for children who have a disability and complex health needs associated with their disability. Some children attending CDNTs may also apply for an AON and may receive an AON via the CDNT or another route. The processes are not co-terminus based on diagnosis.

IHA DNC & DNCW collates data pertaining to the AON process under the Disability Act, 2005 as per the HSE Operational Guidance System (OGS) which is reported on a quarterly basis. The most recent report available is the end of Quarter 4 2024. Please see the table below with information pertaining to IHA DNC & IHA DNCW overdue AON applications to be completed.

*Please note: Overdue AON applications as captured on OGS are categorised by timeframes of:*

- *Less than 1 month*
- *1 - 3 Months*
- *Over 3 Months*

	Overdue Total	<1 Month	1-3 Months	>3 Months
North Dublin	1,937	73	157	1,707
Dublin North Central	313	20	37	256
North West Dublin	943	42	73	828
<b>IHA DNC &amp; DNCW</b>	<b>3,193</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>2,791</b>

*Overdue applications are calculated based on the statutory timelines of 3 months from start stage 2 and no more than 6 months from the application date.*

I may reassure you IHA DNC & IHA DNCW are constantly working to improve the waiting time for the service and efforts are ongoing to improve waiting times. I understand that each parent's priority is for their child and I empathise with the frustrations of those currently awaiting an assessment. The AON office in IHA DNC & IHA DNCW may be contacted by email at [aon.dncc@hse.ie](mailto:aon.dncc@hse.ie) or by phone on 01 795 7950 if any families wish to discuss their child's case further.

I trust this information may assist your query.

Yours sincerely,

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**Ms Olive Hanley**  
**Head of Service for Disability**  
**Covering Integrated Health Areas of Dublin North County and**  
**Dublin North City & West**