



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 Director,
National Disability Team,
First Floor- Offices 13, 14, 15,
Roselawn House, University Business Complex,
National Technology Park,
Castletroy,

10th March 2025

Deputy Holly Cairns,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: holly.cairns@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Cairns,

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

PQ: 7424/25

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth further to Parliamentary Question No. 978 of 5 February 2025, the breakdown of the overdue applications for assessments of need, by the number of months that individuals have been waiting, for each local health 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 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 2024, 10.4% of assessments were completed within the timeframes set out in the Disability Act 2005 and accompanying Regulations.

Assessment of Need reports are generated by the Assessment Officers' System Database (AOS). This system was adapted from an existing database developed in 2002 to manage Occupational Guidance, and is currently used to facilitate the case management, planning and reporting of assessments and services to children with a disability eligible to apply for an assessment under the Disability Act, 2005. The system also facilitates the HSE's statutory reporting obligations under Section 13 of the Act.

The AOS was developed by a small software development company, which no longer provides maintenance or technical support for the system. The database is over 20 years old and has not had the necessary upgrades



or technical changes in recent years that are generally required by IT systems, to reflect changes in policy, operational practice and user requirements. The limitation of the AOS has created many challenges for both Disability Services nationally and for system users locally and has impacted on our ability to generate ad hoc reports. As a result, we are reliant on the reports that were built into the system when it was initially developed, mainly in order to comply with Section 13 of the Disability Act, 2005

Reports from the AOS are published quarterly. Unfortunately the AOS does not have the functionality to provide ad hoc reports on the breakdown of the overdue applications for assessments of need, by the number of months that individuals have been waiting.

A new integrated Management Information System for children's disability services has been developed and is currently being rolled out to the Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs). This system – the CDNT IMS will include a module on the Assessment of Need process under the Disability Act, 2005. It is envisaged that this will replace the AOS and will, in due course, facilitate the HSE to provide a wide range of reports on AON activity.

The status of the new AoN ICT system is as follows:

- Contracts for the replacement of the existing AoN case management system have been signed with a software vendor. The system specification, following workshops with Assessment Officers and Liaison Officers, was agreed in Q3 2024.
- Software development commenced in Q4 2024, which included development workshops in December 2024. Final development workshops will take place at the end of March 2025, with software development estimated to be completed by the end of Q2 2025.
- Following the completion of software development, data migration from the existing AOS will take place in Q3 2025, followed by User Acceptance Testing, user training and system go live at end Q3 2025*.

**Please note – unforeseen delays encountered during the software development or data migration stages may impact the system go live date.*

Yours Sincerely,

Bernard O'Regan
Assistant National Director,
Access and Integration,
Disability Services

