

4th March 2025

Mr. Pat Buckley, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2.

PQ ref 7884/ 25

“To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth `her plans to reduce the waiting times for assessment of needs in County Cork; and if she will make a statement on the matter.”

Dear Deputy Buckley,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to respond to your parliamentary question submitted to the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth for response.

Assessment of Need for people born on or after 1st June 2002 is provided for under the Disability Act, 2005. The Act sets out the requirement that AON applications be responded to and finalised (through completion of an assessment and issuance of an AON report) within a 6-month timeline.

AON Core Activity Volumes:

The most recent validated data is the Q4 2024 Assessment of Need Management Report.

As per Table 1 below, the number of AON applications received has greatly increased in recent years. This increased demand is evident in all parts of the country.

Table 1: Applications Received

Assessment of Need - Applications Received												
CHO4	2022				2023				2024			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Total per quarter	154	165	182	182	253	261	254	286	371	556	353	436
Total per year	683				1054				1716			

Additional Initiatives:

Notwithstanding this increased demand, HSE South West has progressed a number of waiting list initiatives to improve our compliance with the legislative timeframes for AON. We have engaged with private providers to procure additional clinical assessments for ASD. Funding was allocated by the Department of Children; Equality; Disability; Integration & Youth for this initiative.

As a result of this waiting list initiative, HSE South West Disability Services significantly increased the number of assessments completed in 2024 as detailed in table 2.

Table 2: Reports Completed

Assessment of Need - Total Number of Reports Completed												
CHO4	2022				2023				2024			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Total per quarter	294	161	157	129	137	199	200	219	247	241	246	241
Total per year	741				755				975			

Current Waiting List Numbers:

Despite the increased volume of assessments completed (table 3), due to the greatly increased number of applications received the number of overdue assessments also increased and was 1158 at Q4 2024.

Of note, the number of overdue assessments is significantly higher in several other areas of the country despite HSE South West having a large proportion of the population.

Table 3: Overdue for Completion

Assessment of Need - Overdue *								
CHO4	2023				2024			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Total per Qtr	812	800	771	796	808	857	967	1158

*Overdue to commence (Stage 1) plus overdue for completion (Stage 2).

Currently based on the provision of 80 assessments a month the timeline for completion of an assessment is 12 months from date of application. With an increased number of assessments for 2025 we envisage that the timeline will be reduced to 9 months. This is based on the number of applications received remaining in line with recent figures of on average 100 applications per month for Q3/Q4 2024.



If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Yours sincerely,

**Ms. Angela O'Neill,
Head of Disability Services,
HSE South West**

