



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

Mr Barry Heneghan, TD,  
Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2

Email: [barry.heneghan@oireachtas.ie](mailto:barry.heneghan@oireachtas.ie)

**PQ 8936/25** *"To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the measures being taken to urgently address the shortage of clinical staff resources at the assessment of need office in the integrated health area for Dublin north city where at present there is an insufficient amount of both staff and other resources to cope with the extensive demand and high level of applications; and if she will make a statement on the matter."* -**Barry Heneghan, TD.**

Dear Deputy Heneghan,

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 have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

The Assessment of Need (AON) office covering Integrated Health Area Dublin North County (IHA DNC) and Integrated Health Area Dublin North City & West (IHA DNCW) is experiencing a high level of applications for assessments. The AON office is committed to responding to all appropriate applications for AON as per the Disability Act 2005.

The clinical aspect of a child's AON is completed by Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) and through various private providers. AON allocates assessments to our CDNT's and clinical service providers on an ongoing basis.

Due to the ongoing challenges with recruitment across Disability and Health sector services IHA DNC and IHA DNCW Disability Services along with lead agencies St Michael's House (SMH), Central Remedial Clinic (CRC) and Avista launched targeted international recruitment campaigns for Health and Social Care Professional posts to work within the CDNTs. The campaigns generated a lot of interest. As all successful candidates must go through the normal clearance processes, there are some delays experienced in particular with CORU registrations. We continue to work with recruitment colleagues to get candidates processed and commenced on CDNTs. A number of candidates commenced and there are others progressing through clearances. We were also successful with finding candidates for bespoke posts such as a Clinical Specialist Speech and Language Therapists (SLT). Two

Senior Occupational Therapist (OT) posts have also recently been interviewed with successful candidates currently being offered contracts.

In addition to the ongoing recruitment efforts, the IHAs are working to alleviate the waiting times experienced by some children and families to receive an AON where deemed appropriate and the following steps are ongoing:

- Commencement of a time limited initiative to expedite the processing of applications for AON including stage one parent interviews. To facilitate this, Disability Services IHA DNC & IHA DNCW have temporarily reconfigured and reallocated some resources to support a response to the current bottleneck.
- Disability Services continues to engage with private sector providers to expand clinical assessment capacity. Progress was recently made in identifying some providers who may assist in increasing clinical assessment capacity from Quarter 3 onwards 2025.

It may be helpful to know an AON diagnosis is not essential for children to access health services. Parents are welcome to refer their child to their local health services by completing the attached Children's Services Referral form and returning it to [cro.dncc@hse.ie](mailto:cro.dncc@hse.ie).

Further information on making a referral to children's services can be access via the following link: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/2/primarycare/pcteams/dublin-north-city-and-county/central-referrals-office-dublin-north-city-and-county.html>

I trust this information clarifies this matter for you

Yours sincerely,

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**Mr Enda Doody**  
**Acting Head of Service for Disability**  
**Covering Integrated Health Areas of Dublin North County and**  
**Dublin North City & West**