



30<sup>th</sup> January 2025

Mr. David Cullinane TD  
Dail Eireann  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2

**PQ 46664/24**

**To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the number of children on a waiting list for assessment of need in County Waterford; and the average length of time it takes a child in Waterford to receive an assessment.**

**PQ 46665/24**

**To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the number of children on a CDNT waiting list for therapy or assessment or any other appointment in County Waterford.**

**PQ 46666/24**

**To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the staffing levels and vacancies for relevant children's disability network teams covering County Waterford.**

Dear Deputy Cullinane,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Questions, which were submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

*I have reviewed the matter and the following is the current position.*

HSE Children's Disability Services has undergone significant reform and restructuring over the past three years with the implementation of the Progressing Disability Services (PDS). The core focus of this change is to ensure that children and their families, with complex interdisciplinary needs, will receive an appropriate and accessible family centred service.

It is important to note that the data provided in the tables below are based on the most recent figures available captured at a specific point in time and therefore subject to change.

The table below outlines the number of children on **CDNT - Network 6 Dungarvan, Network 7 North City Waterford and Network 7 South City Waterford (CRC)** waiting list for therapy or assessment or any appointment:

Metric	CDNT Dungarvan	CDNT North City Waterford	CDNT South City Waterford (CRC)
Total no. of children registered for a team based service from the CDNT	458	378	345
No. of children awaiting a team based initial assessment following Referral to the CDNT	28	69	98



No. of children awaiting an initial contact following transfer to the CDNT in September 2021	67	144	8
No. of children who have received a level service but due to staff vacancies and ongoing resourcing of the team have some unmet need	391	165	253
No. of children listed to be considered for an autism assessment	72	31	16

#### **Staffing Levels & Vacancies - CDNTs Waterford**

The following table outlines the staffing levels and vacancies for **CDNT - Network 6 Dungarvan, Network 7 North City Waterford and Network 7 South City Waterford (CRC)**:

<b>CDNT</b>	<b>WTE in Post</b>	<b>WTE Vacancy</b>
CDNT Dungarvan	13.00	7.10
CDNT North City Waterford	10.87	5.00
CDNT South City Waterford (CRC)	11.52	2.00

#### **Assessment of Need (AON) - Waiting times Waterford**

There are no applicants on a waiting list for commencement of their AON application. All completed applications under AON commence the AON process within one week of being received in the AON Department.

Once a completed application is received in the AON Department, the Assessment Officer (AO) has three months to complete Stage I of the AON process. Stage I consists of the AO reviewing the application and requesting required reports/documentation in order to assist with determining if the applicant should progress to Stage II for diagnostic assessment.

The AO has three months to complete Stage II of the AON process. Stage II is when the AO requests the assessment from Primary Care/CDNTs/CAMHS, if the applicant is deemed eligible under the Disability Act 2005. Due to reduced resources, some assessments are being outsourced to a private provider. There are currently 3 applicants overdue to start Stage II under AON in Waterford.

There were 81 applications under AON in Waterford in 2023 and 159 in 2024. Given the increased demand and rise in the number of applications, there is a delay in assessment being completed. Currently applicants who applied in July 2024 are at Stage II and awaiting diagnostic assessment. It is estimated these assessments will be completed within the next four months.

As with other areas Disability Services within South East Community Healthcare (SECH) are continuing to experience significant recruitment challenges. The HSE is operating in a very competitive market as there are significant shortages of qualified healthcare professionals nationally and internationally. SECH continues to prioritise local competitions for all disciplines and continues to express posts out to current national panels where relevant.



The HSE acknowledges that waiting times for CDNT service at this time are stressful for children and their families, and will continue to explore a range of options to enhance the recruitment and retention of essential staff into our CDNTs.

I trust this information is of assistance to you. Should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle Doyle".

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**Michelle Doyle**  
**Head of Service – Disability Services**  
**South East Community Healthcare**

A second handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle Doyle".