



Ceannasai na Seirbhísi Curam Michumais General Manager of Disability Services – Louth Meath

Eagraíocht Cúram Sláinte Pobail Lár Tire
An Lú, An Mhí,
Oifig Ceantair, Bóthar Cheanannais, Bhaile
Átha Fhirdia, Co. Lú

Midlands Louth Meath Community
Healthcare Organisation (MLM CHO)
St Brigids Hospital Complex, Ardee,
Co. Louth A92 DRN0
E-mail:
GM.DisabilitiesLouthMeath@hse.ie

9th April 2025

Deputy Joanna Byrne,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Ref: PQ 14319/25, 14320/25, 14321/25, 14322/25, 14324/25, 14325/25, 14326/25

Dear Deputy Byrne,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and outlined the position as follows.

PQ Ref: 14319/25: The number of children in Louth who applied for an assessment of needs for each of the years 2020 to 2025; the number of assessment of needs carried out for the each of the years 2020 to 2025, in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Please see below for increase in application numbers for Louth AON from 2020 – 2025 to date (09th April 2025).

Louth & North Meath AON have experienced a significant increase in applications year on year and in particular from 2023 onwards.

| Year | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | Total |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| 2020 | 10 | 20 | 18 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 9 | 13 | 4 | 98 |
| 2021 | 2 | 3 | 10 | 11 | 17 | 16 | 5 | 4 | 9 | 14 | 7 | 9 | 107 |
| 2022 | 22 | 22 | 14 | 7 | 15 | 17 | 13 | 22 | 22 | 32 | 32 | 26 | 244 |
| 2023 | 32 | 37 | 46 | 41 | 48 | 50 | 32 | 29 | 38 | 51 | 56 | 32 | 492 |
| 2024 | 57 | 52 | 58 | 42 | 80 | 68 | 58 | 35 | 76 | 56 | 68 | 36 | 686 |
| 2025 | 54 | 65 | 76 | 28 | | | | | | | | | 223 |

Number of assessment of needs carried out for the each of the years 2020 to 2025 (moved to Stage 2).

| Year | Moved to Stage 2 |
|------|------------------|
| 2020 | 102 |

| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| 2021 | 127 |
| 2022 | 203 |
| 2023 | 371 |
| 2024 | 161 |
| 2025 (Jan - March) | 45 |

PQ Ref: 14320/25: The number of children in Louth that are currently awaiting an assessment of need; the number of these children that have been waiting up to three months; the number waiting between three and six months; the number waiting between six and twelve months; the number waiting more than twelve months; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Louth AON covers North and South Louth, as well as the North Meath & Ardee Community Healthcare Networks.

As of 09th April 2025, in Louth/North Meath AON there are currently:

- 902 children in Stage 1 awaiting assessment of need;
- 310 children in Stage 2;
- 1212 children in total.

Current Wait List Times:

12+ months: 245

6-12 months: 350

3-6 months: 155

Below 3 months: 152

902 total

PQ Ref: 14321/25: To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the average waiting time in Louth for a child seeking an assessment of needs.

Currently Louth AON are processing applications from late 2023.

The statutory timeframes are not being met due to limited staff resources and an unprecedented increase in applications and workload, which has significantly affected wait times.

PQ Ref: 14322/25: To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the longest waiting time in Louth for a child seeking an assessment of needs.

Currently Louth AON are processing applications from late 2023.

PQ Ref: 14324/25: To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth to confirm the current pathway in place to process assessment of need applications for children in Louth.

Louth AON have recruited extra resources in the last year to address the significant increase in workload and waiting list, with the addition of a temporary Assessment Officer in 2024 to join the permanent Assessment Officer and the addition of a 2nd temporary administrator in 2025 to join the existing temporary administrator already in place.

Currently Louth AON is outsourcing the vast majority of assessments to HSE-approved private providers as Primary Care do not carry out assessments for Louth AON and 2 out of 3 CDNT's (covering North & South Louth and North Meath & Ardee) are at capacity for carrying out AON assessments.

PQ Ref: 14325/25: To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth to provide a breakdown by grade of the current staffing resources in place to process assessment of need applications for children in Louth.

Currently there are four staff members in place in Louth & North Meath AON.

Two Grade VII Assessment of Need Officers

Two Grade III Clerical Officers

PQ Ref: 14326/25: To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the plans or proposals in place to ensure that children can access an assessment of need and any subsequent recommended supports within the statutory timeframes, in Louth; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Louth AON can only comment on Assessment of Need timeframes and cannot comment on the timeframes for subsequent recommended supports and interventions (for example wait times within Primary Care or CDNT).

It is currently not possible to guarantee statutory timeframes for when completion of AON's will be met. Limited staff resources and an unprecedented increase in applications and workload, has significantly affected wait times and it is out of the control of current AON staff to meet statutory timeframes.

I trust the above is in order but please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any further queries in this regard.

Yours sincerely,

Wanetta Duff
General Manager, Disability Services, HSE Louth Meath CHO