



**Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,**  
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,  
31-33 Sráid Chaitríona, Luimneach.

**Office of the Head of Operations,**  
Disability Services/Social Care Division,  
31-33 Catherine Street, Limerick.

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23<sup>rd</sup> May 2022

Deputy Alan Farrell,  
Dail Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.  
E-mail: [alan.farrell@oireachtas.ie](mailto:alan.farrell@oireachtas.ie)

Dear Deputy Farrell,

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: 23517/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health if there are clinical psychologists working in the private sector from whom the HSE will accept a report confirming a diagnosis of autism; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**HSE Response**

Children's disability services are provided based on a child's needs rather than their diagnosis. Parents may refer their children directly to their local Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT) by completing the relevant referral forms. They do not need to provide any professional reports. When families have reports available from health, social care or education professionals, these will be considered by the team. This will include where appropriate, consideration of the outcome of the assessment, the assessment tools used and the professionals involved in the assessment.

When a child applies for an Assessment of Need under the Disability Act (2005), the first stage of the assessment comprises a desktop assessment of any available reports that is completed by the Assessment Officer. Assessments completed in the previous twelve months can be included as part of the Assessment of Need if the following conditions are fulfilled:

- The assessments have been carried out either by HSE staff or staff employed by HSE-funded agencies, where they have been commissioned by the HSE from private providers or where the family present reports from private providers or from service providers in other jurisdictions.
- It is possible to verify that the assessment was carried out in line with the standards associated with the legislation.
- It is possible to generate an assessment report in line with the legislation i.e. where the need is identified and outlined without regard to the cost or capacity to provide services.
- The Assessment Officer has parental consent to include the report as part of the Assessment of Need and that this report meets all of the above criteria.



On occasion and in line with correct procurement procedures, Garda vetting and due diligence practice, private providers have been contracted to conduct assessments at Stage 2 of the Assessment of Need process. In such instances, the HSE ensures that the needs of children are assessed in line with the provisions of the legislation and in line with the standards for Assessment of Need laid down by HIQA.

Separate to the Assessment of Need process, some families source private assessments to facilitate access to educational supports such as special schools or classes. In many cases, these are unidisciplinary assessments. In general, HSE or HSE funded services, in line with best practice guidelines, use a multidisciplinary approach to assessment, specifically to ASD assessment. While HSE services may take cognisance of any unidisciplinary reports that may be available, they will undertake a multidisciplinary assessment where appropriate, to confirm a diagnosis and to determine the necessary interventions.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Bernard O'Regan". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**Mr Bernard O'Regan,  
Head of Operations - Disability Services,  
Community Operations**

