



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.

T: 00353 (0) 61 483369
Suíomh Gréasáin/Website: <http://www.hse.ie>

7th March 2023

Deputy Darren O'Rourke,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: darren.orourke@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy O'Rourke,

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: 9164/23

To ask the Minister for Health if consideration has been given to allowing parents and carers use the National Treatment Purchase Fund to access private assessments and services, given the ongoing challenges in children's disability services; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

HSE Response

The NTPF is a corporate body with functions and responsibilities as set out under Statutory Instrument 179 - National Treatment Purchase Fund (Establishment) Order, 2004 and the Nursing Homes Support Scheme Act (2009).

Its key functions are:

- Arranging for the provision of hospital treatment to classes of persons determined by the Minister;
- Collecting, collating and validating information on persons waiting for public hospital treatment;
- Agreeing pricing arrangements with private & voluntary nursing homes under the Nursing Homes Support Scheme
- Furnishing advice to the Minister for Health on related issues
- Performing any other function assigned by the Minister for Health, since July 2012 this includes responsibility for the publication of outpatient waiting lists.

In carrying out its functions, the NTPF works closely with the Department of Health, the HSE, acute public hospitals and private nursing homes across the health system.

The National Treatment Purchase is tasked primarily at reducing waiting times for inpatient/day case treatment.



The NTPF works with public hospitals, as opposed to parents and carers/ service users directly, to offer and provide the funding for treatment to clinically suitable long waiting patients who are on an inpatient/day case waiting list for surgery, having been referred on to such a list following clinical assessment by a consultant/specialist at an outpatient clinic.

The HSE is aware that some families source private assessments, often 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. 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 any necessary health interventions.

On occasion and in line with appropriate procurement procedures, Garda vetting and due diligence practice, private providers have been contracted to provide assessments and / or interventions. In such instances, the HSE ensures that the contracted providers are appropriately qualified and that any assessments or interventions are provided in line with the appropriate standards.

In some Community Healthcare Organisations, once off funding has been identified to procure private assessments where there have been significant waiting times for specific assessments. However, the preferred option is to provide timely assessment and follow up intervention for children through local primary care or disability services as appropriate.

The HSE remains committed to the delivery of appropriate services for children with disabilities and will continue to work with families and staff to develop services that meet their needs.

Yours sincerely,



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

