



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

Office of the Head of Operations,
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21st March 2023

Deputy Holly Cairns,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: holly.cairns@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Cairns,

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: 12469/23

To ask the Minister for Health the services he is providing for individuals who receive assessments of need or other treatments from unqualified and/or unregistered psychologist.

HSE Response

The HSE and its funded service providers employ psychologists across a range of services. Although psychologists are not subject to CORU registration, the HSE ensures that all psychologists employed in its services are appropriately qualified.

The Assessment of Need process is set out in the [Disability Act, 2005](#). The aim of an Assessment of Need under the Disability Act is to identify whether a person has a disability, any health and education needs arising from that disability, as well as what services are required to meet those needs. As required by the Act, the legislative Assessment of Need is coordinated by a HSE Assessment Officer.

HSE procedures specify that it is the Assessment Officer's role to ensure that potential assessors are suitably qualified and are familiar with the HSE's guidance for assessors and the iHIQA Standards for Assessment of Need. Where assessors are subject to statutory registration with a professional body such as CORU or the Medical Council, they must include their registration number on all Assessment of Need reports.

When undertaking an Assessment of Need clinical assessments completed in the previous twelve months can be included 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 appropriate procurement procedures, Garda vetting and due diligence practice; private providers have been contracted by the HSE to provide a range of assessments and / or interventions. These arrangements include contracting of psychology services. 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.

Parents may refer their children directly to primary care or to Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNT) by completing the relevant referral forms. A GP referral is required for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, (CAMHS). Parents do not need to provide any professional reports to access health services. When families have reports available from health, social care or education professionals, these will be considered by the services. This will include where appropriate, consideration of the outcome of the assessment, the assessment tools used and the professionals involved in the assessment.

Some families source private assessments to facilitate access to educational supports such as special schools or classes. In many cases, these are unidisciplinary assessments which are usually accepted in the education sector. In general, HSE or HSE funded services, in line with best practice guidelines, use a multidisciplinary approach to assessment, specifically to ASD assessment. In these circumstances, 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.

CORU is Ireland's multi-profession health regulator. Its role is to protect the public by promoting high standards of professional conduct, education, training and competence through statutory registration of health and social care professionals. CORU was set up under the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (as amended). It is made up of the Health and Social Care Professionals Council and the Registration Boards, one for each profession named in the Act. The Health and Social Care Professionals Council has 33 voluntary members and a Chair, appointed by the Minister for Health.

Each of the professions named in the Act is represented on the Council. There are also members from the education sector, patient advocacy groups, the voluntary sector and representatives of public and private sector organisations who are concerned with health and social care. Psychologists have yet to be registered with CORU. This is a matter for the Professional Regulatory Unit in the Department of Health.

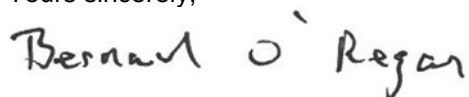
The HSE and has no role in the regulation of clinicians and healthcare practitioners including psychologists.

Everyone working in the HSE, at a national level, and in each of our CHOs and our children's disability network teams, is very aware of the importance of children's disability services and early intervention in the lives of many families all over Ireland. Our 91 children's disability teams provide care and therapy for approximately 42,000 children and we know that makes a huge difference to children's lives. It is not acceptable to have to wait an extended time for either an assessment of need or therapy.

The HSE acknowledges that there are long waiting lists for some of our services. We are aware that in these circumstances, families sometimes access assessments privately.

We apologise to those families who have had a poor experience in trying to access services.

Yours sincerely,



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

