



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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13th April 2023

Deputy Emer Higgins,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: emer.higgins@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Higgins,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the following parliamentary questions, which were submitted to this department for response.

PQ: 14933/22

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth if his Department can provide a list or database of private medical professionals who can carry out an assessment of needs that the HSE approves of; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

HSE Response

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, the nature and extent of the disability, any health and education needs arising from that disability, as well as what services are required to meet those needs.

The numbers of applications for AON under the Act have risen steadily since its implementation in June 2007. 6,755 applications for AON were received in 2022. This was the highest number of applications received in any year since Part 2 of the Act was commenced in June 2007.

The HSE has endeavoured to meet its legislative obligations under the Act. However, as a consequence of a High Court ruling of December 2009, the effect of which was to open eligibility to all persons born after 1st June 2002 who are suspected of having a disability, the number of children aged five and over, and in addition of school-going age, has risen steadily as a percentage of all applications received. At the end of 2011, the figure stood at 26%, while throughout 2022, this figure averaged 55%. This is a reflection that the AON process is an accumulative process in terms of numbers of children and young people seeking access.

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.

The HSE can confirm that it does not keep a centrally maintained list or database of private medical professionals who can carry out an assessment of needs.

Some Community Healthcare Areas have their own local contacts for organisations who hold their own list/ database of private medical professionals.

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, most commonly for 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.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bernard O'Regan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a clear, legible font.

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

