



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,
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9th June 2023

Deputy David Stanton,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: david.stanton@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Stanton,

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: 25895/23

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the engagement he has had with the HSE in order to facilitate private operators carrying out assessments for children with autism that would be accepted by the local community disability network team; and if he will make a statement on the matter

HSE Response

Private providers are currently being contracted by the HSE 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, appropriate procurement procedures, Garda vetting and due diligence practice.

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.



Approximately €11m has been allocated to address waiting lists for clinical assessments identified through the Assessment of Need process. This funding will be utilised to procure diagnostic ASD assessments from the private sector. A successful procurement process will facilitate the Children's Disability Network Teams to focus on the provision of intervention for children on their caseloads. In addition, the HSE at local level uses time related savings from time to time to source AON assessments privately for children in the order as registered on the AOS (AON information management system).

At present, the HSE does not fund or reimburse any fees paid to private practitioners in any of the health service areas where assessments have been commissioned by the service user or their family directly as this would undermine the principle of equity of access for all children based on individual need.

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

It is important to note that children do not require an Assessment of Need as defined by the Disability Act (2005) in order to access a CDNT service. They can be referred by a healthcare professional or parent/carer to the CDNT for children with complex needs as a result of their disability, or to Primary Care for children with non complex needs.

Yours Sincerely,



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

