



Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,
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9th October 2023

Deputy Michael Lowry,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: michael.lowry@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Lowry,

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: 41878/23

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth if he can confirm whether the six planned regional assessment teams were fully established and operational by 1 August 2023 to address the significant waiting lists for assessments of needs; if, in the event that the teams were not fully operational by this date, he has considered allowing for the full reimbursement of private treatment expenses for children with disabilities and special education needs assessment from the State; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

HSE Response

Assessment of Need Administrative Hubs

AON Administrative Hubs are now in place in Community Healthcare Areas (CHOs) 1, 4, 5, 7, and 8.

Assessment of Need Assessment hubs have been established in CHOs 3, 6 and 9. CHO 3 is utilising existing staff reassigned from CDNT service. CHO 6's hub is pending recruitment of clinical specialist posts and in interim, the AON process is outsourced to a private service provider.

CHO 9 has recruited 2 of its 3 clinical specialists and recruitment of the 3rd is in train.

Roadmap for Service Improvement 2023 – 2026

Following the HSE Board's approval of the Roadmap for Service Improvement 2023 – 2026 on July 28th 2023, confirmation of its launch date by Government is pending, however, a number of actions have been progressed in the interim. This includes:

- **Framework of Approved Providers:** Paper drafted on a call for project submissions by organisations currently providing services for, or that are appropriate for children with disabilities, for inclusion in this Framework for CDNTs to offer waitlisted children and families. This will be advertised week commencing October 9th 2023 with a two week close out window.



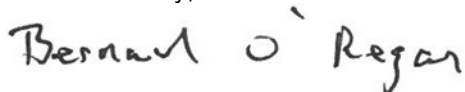
It is important to note that children do not require an Assessment of Need as defined by the Disability Act (2005) in order to access a CDNT or Primary Care service.

Private providers are currently being contracted by the HSE and its funded agencies to provide assessments and / or interventions. In such instances, the HSE and HSE funded agencies ensure 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.

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.

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.

Yours sincerely,



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

