



Oifig an Stiúrthóir Cúnta Náisiúnta,
Foireann Míchumais Náisiúnta,
An Chéad Urlár - Oifigí 13, 14, 15,
Áras Phlásóg na Rós, Coimpléasc Gnó na hOllscoile,
Páirc Náisiúnta Teicneolaíochta,
Caladh an Treoigh,
Luimneach.

Office of the Assistant National Director,
National Disability Team,
First Floor- Offices 13, 14, 15,
Roselawn House, University Business Complex,
National Technology Park,
Castletroy,
Limerick.

23rd July 2024

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: 32788/24

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the number of families that have received reimbursements for private autism assessments for the past five years, in tabular form.

HSE Response

Targeted Initiative focused on long waiting families

A new waiting list initiative, launched in June 2024, will target those families waiting longest for AONs, with the HSE reimbursing clinicians directly through the procurement of capacity from approved private providers. This provides a more equitable and fair approach rather than reimbursement of parents directly.

All aspects of the Assessment of Need process must be operated within the AON legislation, the HSE SOP and the iHIQA standards.

In line with appropriate procurement procedures, Garda vetting and due diligence practice, private providers are contracted by the HSE to provide assessments and / or interventions.

The HSE must ensure that the contracted providers are appropriately qualified and that any assessments or interventions are provided in line with the legislation, HSE SOP and the iHIQA standards.

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.

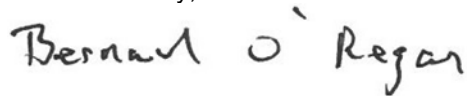
The HSE does not fund or reimburse any fees paid to private practitioners in any of the health service areas where assessments, interventions or therapies have been commissioned by the service user or their family directly.

The HSE has no mandate or financial mechanism to reimburse fees paid by families directly to private agencies for health services. If a parent or guardian has identified a private provider or assessor willing to carry out an Assessment on their child, they can discuss this with HSE representatives. If the provider has the appropriate qualifications and meets the HSE's criteria in relation to the relevant standards as outlined above, then they may be contracted to undertake assessments. The HSE will pay the provider/assessor directly for any assessment.

The HSE is continuing to identify private providers/assessors who have the capacity to complete assessments, so that we can outsource this work to help reduce waiting list times.

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. 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,



Bernard O'Regan
Assistant National Director
National Disability Team

