



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,
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Roselawn House, University Business
Complex, National Technology Park,
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24th June 2025

Deputy James Geoghegan,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: james.geoghegan@oireachtas.ie

PQ: 30958/25

To ask the Minister for Children; Disability and Equality how the HSE determines when a psychologist who is conducting an assessment of need process, either directly or indirectly for the HSE, is suitably qualified to conduct that assessment of need; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Geoghegan,

Thank you for your Parliamentary Question referenced above, which has been forwarded to me for direct reply.

The HSE and its funded service providers directly employ psychologists across a range of services. Appointees must meet the HSE's, statutory and regulatory appointment standards which includes ensuring the appointee is appropriately qualified and meet the HSE's eligibility criteria for Psychologists as per Appendix 1.

Psychologists appointed to HSE roles must also attain successful clearances for recruitment including Garda Vetting, satisfactory references and occupational health clearance.

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 HIQA Standards for Assessment of Need.

All aspects of the Assessment of Need process must be operated within the AON legislation, the HSE Standard Operating Procedure and the HIQA standards.

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.

In line with appropriate procurement procedures, Garda vetting and due diligence practice, staff sourced from private providers have been utilised to backfill vacancies on Children's Disability Network Teams in Regional Health Areas. These staff report to their Children's Disability Network Team lead agency regarding certain matters for example: payment, leave and pre-employment mandatory training. With regard to clinical and professional work undertaken, these staff report to the respective Children's Disability Network Manager (CDNM). Qualifications are validated by the CDNM or the Head of Disability Services in the local area.

Accountability is retained by the service provider to ensure that the contracted assessments have been carried out in accordance with best practice and professional standards for multidisciplinary assessments. This includes the provision of appropriate professional and clinical supervision.



When securing private assessments, each Healthcare Area will ensure compliance with procurement regulations and will ensure that appropriate indemnities are in place. Privately commissioned reports for AON are reviewed by an appropriately qualified clinician at local level to ensure they meet adequate governance standards.

The above procedures also apply to all staff including HSE and staff employed by organisations that have been contracted by the HSE.

Key National Documents which provide guidance and information for staff working on CDNTs and for families are available at:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/disability/progressing-disability/pds-programme/>

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.

HSE Governance Framework

The HSE has established a formal and robust Governance Framework to cover funding relationships with all Non-Statutory Agencies that are contracted to provide services on behalf of the HSE. This includes voluntary organisations funded under Section 38 and Section 39 of the Health Act. The framework was introduced in order to implement the legislative provisions of the Health Act, 2004 and to reflect the requirements for public accountability whereby the HSE is legally obliged to account for all public expenditure on health and personal social services and to contractually underpin the grant-funding provided.

As part of a HSE wide requirement to ensure appropriate governance arrangements that underpin the release of the funding of Agencies, a Governance Framework for Funded Agencies (Framework) has been developed which ensures a consistent approach in this regard.

The HSE must have in place appropriate contractual arrangements Service Arrangements (SA) and Grant Aid Agreements (GA) with all Agencies that have funding released to them for the provision of services.

The Service Arrangement and Grant Aid Agreement are contracts and operate on the principles of contract law. The Framework was introduced to implement the legislative provisions of the Health Act, 2004 and to reflect the requirements for public accountability where the HSE is legally obliged to account for all public expenditure on health and personal social services. In this regard, the SA is a key document which comprises of Part 1 and the HPSR documents

The Framework seeks to provide a level of governance which links funding provided to a quantum of service and provides for these services to be linked to quality standards, with continuous monitoring to ensure equity, efficiency and effective use of available resources.

A critical element of the Governance Framework is the use of the appropriate documentation to underpin the release of public funds to Agencies. The Service Arrangement has undergone a review and the updated Service Arrangement documentation for use in 2025 now consists of a Part I and a Healthcare Provider Specific Requirements (HPSR) which replaces the Part II (Schedules) which was used up until 2024.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr. Aoife O'Donohue,
Stiúrthóir Náisiúnta Cúntóir, Seirbhísí Mhíchumas, Rochtain agus Imeachadh,
Assistant National Director, Disability Services, Transformation & Programme Coordination,
Access & Integration