



Oifig an Stiúrthóir Cúnta Náisiúnta,
Foireann Míchumais Náisiúnta,
An Chéad Urlár - Oifigí 13, 14, 15,
Àras 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,

24th March 2025

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: 11174/25

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth if there are plans to roll out HSE adult autism assessments; and if so, the timeline involved in such a roll-out.

HSE Response

Disability services are provided based on the presenting needs of an individual rather than by the diagnosis of the individual or the type of disability or service. Services are provided following individual assessment according to the person's own individual service and support needs. For adults who may be autistic, GP's may refer to adult psychology in Primary Care or the Multidisciplinary Adult Disability Team.

It is acknowledged however, that the current system is very variable across the country and does not adequately serve the needs of autistic adults. In many areas, adult assessments are only available privately; this is an unsatisfactory situation and we are working to address this.

Service Improvement Programme

The Service Improvement Programme Board for the Autistic Community has been tasked with leading out on an agreed set of priorities that will have greatest impact in terms of shaping how services can be delivered to autistic people. It is also tasked with creating greater awareness of autism in terms of supporting clinicians, other staff and local communities in promoting inclusion and fostering positive attitudes.

The Assessment and Pathways Working Group was established to develop a standardised assessment approach for use in all services dealing with the assessment of Autism to ensure that every assessment is of



an acceptable and agreed standard, regardless of which service is being accessed. In addition, it seeks to agree a standardised service user journey and the implementation of a consistent core service offering across those providing services to people who are Autistic. The Working Group, including people with lived experience of autism, has consulted widely with key stakeholders in the design and formulation stage of the project; which has been particularly important in the context of the implementation of a tiered approach to assessment.

Its main work focus is:

- To develop an operational model for a tiered approach to Autism Assessment through developing clear and functioning pathways to services.
- To strengthen Disability, Primary Care and Mental Health services by operating a shared Model of Service.
- An implementation plan to include training which takes cognisance of existing policies of the HSE.

The 2nd and final Phase of the Protocol piloting is now complete, as is the independent evaluation undertaken by the Centre for Effective Services. Following incorporation of learnings from the evaluation and further consultation with professional bodies and civil society, we anticipate that national rollout of the final version of the protocol will commence with training in each of the 6 Health Regions in Quarter 3 2025. The Protocol will be reviewed annually with new learnings incorporated as needs be.

Yours Sincerely,

**Bernard O Regan,
Assistant National Director,
Access and Integration,
Disability Services**

