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Deputy Mattie McGrath TD
Dail Eireann
Leinster House
Dublin

PQ 9883/25

To ask the Minister for Health Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth the steps being taken to reduce the waiting times for autism assessments in South Tipperary which are currently taking over two years; if those waiting for over six months can obtain an assessment privately and be reimbursed by the HSE; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy McGrath,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which was submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

I have reviewed the matter and the following is the current position.

The Primary Care Autism Assessment Team was set up after the formation of the Children Disabilities Network Teams (CDNT) to address the gap in Autism Assessment services for the children categorised as 'non-complex' and who remained under the care of Primary Care Services.

The demand for this service currently exceeds clinical capacity and this unfortunately does mean that there is a significant and growing waiting list. The wait time for assessment for a new referral is currently 48 months. The HSE acknowledges that current waiting times for assessment are stressful for children and their families. The Primary Care Autism Assessment Team (PCAAT) continues to address the waiting list in chronological order.

My understanding is that there is no option to reimburse a privately sourced assessment.

I trust this information is of assistance to you. Should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Goff
A/Head of Service-Primary Care
South East Community Healthcare