



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.

30th June 2025

Deputy Louise O'Reilly,
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: louise.oreilly@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy O'Reilly,

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: 25906/25

To ask the Minister for Health the reason neurodivergent and neurodiverse people are not automatically qualified for the vulnerable persons register; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy O'Reilly,

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

Disability services focus on enabling people with disabilities to achieve their full potential, living ordinary lives in ordinary places, as independently as possible, while ensuring that the voices of service users and their families are heard and that they are fully involved in planning and improving services to meet their needs.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, or UN CRPD, is a human rights treaty developed by the United Nations. It outlines the rights of people with disabilities.

Ireland signed the UN CRPD in 2007, and ratified it in March 2018. Ratification of a human rights treaty can be thought of as a promise. It means that the government has promised to change laws, policies, and practices to make sure everyone can enjoy the rights set out in the treaty.

The implementation of the UN CRPD is monitored. In Ireland, it is monitored by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, IHREC.

Article 25 of the UN CRPD concerns health: The right to the highest attainable standard of health. The right to receive health care, including specialised health care required because of a disability, without discrimination. The right to receive health care in one's own community, and to be treated with respect and have one's autonomy respected.

People who are autistic/ neurodiverse should be accepted as they are, equal, valued, respected and included and enabled to fully engage in life.

The "Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse - National Policy and Procedures", which applies to all HSE and HSE funded services, outlines a number of principles to promote the welfare of vulnerable people and safeguard them from abuse.

These include a requirement that all services must have a publicly declared "No Tolerance" approach to any form of abuse and must promote a culture which supports this ethos.

Some of the principles underpinning the policy include:

- Respect for human rights



- A person centred approach to care and services
- Promotion of advocacy.
- Respect for confidentiality
- Empowerment of individuals
- A collaborative approach.

Please see:

<https://www2.healthservice.hse.ie/organisation/national-pppgs/safeguarding-vulnerable-persons-at-risk-of-abuse-2014-national-policy-procedures/>

This policy and procedures document addresses the issue of safeguarding all persons at risk of abuse across the Social Care Division, encompassing older people and persons with a disability.

The HSE is moving away from the use of the term “vulnerable adult” due to negative connotations associated with the term and the reinforcement of stereotypes and power imbalances. The HSE is now using the term adults at risk of abuse.

The HSE, considers an adult at risk of abuse as an adult who may be restricted in capacity to guard himself/herself against harm or exploitation or to report such harm or exploitation. This may arise as a result of physical or intellectual impairment and risk of abuse may be influenced by both context and individual circumstances. Because of his or her vulnerability, the individual may be in receipt of a care service in his or her own home, in the community or be resident in a residential care home, nursing home or other setting.

With regard to the specific question asked, clarity is required as to what would be the purpose of such a register.

It is important to note that, all persons at risk of abuse must be secure in the knowledge that all information about them is managed appropriately and that there is a clear understanding of confidentiality among all service personnel. This must be consistent with the HSE Record Management Policy.

Yours sincerely,

Tom McGuirk,
General Manager, Disability Services, Transformation & Programme Coordination, Access & Integration.