



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,
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23rd September 2025

Deputy Paul Murphy,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: paul.murphyk@oireachtas.ie

PQ: 49356/25

To ask the Minister for Children; Disability and Equality her views on restrictive practice as it relates to children with additional needs that are a flight risk; and whether she will instruct her Department to provide supports to carers of children with additional needs to purchase the necessary equipment to safely travel with their children.

Dear Deputy Murphy,

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

Children with disabilities may be a flight risk for reasons including fear, overstimulation, communication difficulties, or anxiety that triggers a fight or flight response.

Parents or carers of children with disabilities should seek information and advice prior to travelling from the relevant CDNT.

Through the National Disability Services' National Clinical Advisory Groups Chairs Forum, a policy on "*Working towards a Restraint Free Environment for children*" was assigned to the Midwest Clinical Advisory Group (CAG) to develop, with the intent on its completion to share with all CDNT Governance Groups to consider for adoption in their respective Regions.

Currently, the CAG is working through the feedback from the Midwest Governance Group review. The role and remit of the CDNT in other environments e.g. schools, centre based respite services is still to be scoped out.

With regard to restrictive practice and the use of equipment, it must be noted that the use of a restriction in the provision of supports and services is a human rights issue.

Services have a responsibility to reduce imminent risk of harm, mitigate for a risk of harm and prevent, reduce and eliminate the use of restrictions. With good governance, risk can be reduced, safety maintained and restrictions made redundant.

The Health Act 2007 (Care and Support of Residents in Designated Centres for Persons (Children and Adults) with Disabilities) Regulations 2013 provides a definition for what constitutes a restrictive practice: "*means the intentional restriction of a person's voluntary movement or behaviour*".

The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) has produced guidance to assist registered providers of designated centres for people with disabilities and staff working in these centres to focus on quality improvement in the area of restrictive practice. Providers should use this guidance to promote a care environment that is free from restrictive practice, and to assess the use of restrictive practices in their centres with a view to reducing or eliminating their use.

Designated centres for people with disabilities are required to have a policy in place on the use of restrictive practices. All designated centres are required to review this policy every three years. These policies should be in line with national policy and make reference to other relevant legislation, regulations or enactments.



Policies should clearly guide staff on appropriate risk assessment including the risk of absconsion, the prevention, appropriate use and management of restrictive practices so that they inform the quality and safe of care and promote autonomy and the rights of residents. This should include: a commitment to promoting a restraint-free environment, the process for assessing the use of restrictive practices , monitoring, recording and reviewing the use of restrictive practices, guidance on what to do if it is necessary to use a restrictive practice in an unplanned or emergency situation, the governance arrangements for monitoring and auditing the use of restrictive practices.

The decision to use restrictive practices should be appropriately assessed and subject to ongoing review. Carrying out a comprehensive assessment of a person's health and social care needs is a key requirement to ensure that care is appropriate and safe.

Yours Sincerely,

Tom McGuirk,
General Manager, Disability Services, Access & Integration