



**Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,**  
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,  
31-33 Sráid Chaitríona, Luimneach.

**Office of the Head of Operations,**  
Disability Services/Social Care Division,  
31-33 Catherine Street, Limerick.

T: 00353 (0) 61 483369  
Suíomh Gréasáin/Website: <http://www.hse.ie>

11<sup>th</sup> December 2023

Deputy Martin Browne,  
Dail Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.  
E-mail: [martin.browne@oireachtas.ie](mailto:martin.browne@oireachtas.ie)

Dear Deputy Browne,

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: 52456/23**

*To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth if there is a mechanism for private providers to indicate their willingness to participate in the provision of services for children post-assessment of needs in situations where the health service is unable to do so in an adequate timeframe; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**HSE Response**

**Roadmap for Service Improvement 2023 – 2026, Disability Services for Children and Young People**

The Roadmap for Service Improvement **2023 – 2026**, Disability Services for Children and Young People which was approved by the HSE Board on July 28th and was launched by the Government and the HSE on Tuesday 24th October 2023.

***Implementation of the Roadmap for Service Improvement Actions will:***

- Ensure children are referred to the most appropriate service (National Access Policy)
- Reduce the waiting time for children currently waitlisted for CDNTs
- Optimise use of voluntary and private disability service providers for assessments and interventions.
- Improve HSE's legislative compliance for AONs as defined in the Disability Act
- Improve outcomes for children and families and their experience of CDNT service
- Enable teams to optimise service effectiveness and efficiencies, and opportunities to collaborate with community networks such as Children and Young People's Services Committees.
- Improve staff retention on CDNTs in the long-term as a good place to work.

Many of the 60 actions contained in the Roadmap have already been progressed and includes:



- **Framework of Approved Providers:**

The Childrens Disability Services Grant Scheme is applicable to organisations currently providing services for, or that are appropriate for children with disabilities, and will be accessible by Children's Disability Network Teams to offer waitlisted children and families additional supports whilst they await CDNT services. There has been a huge response from voluntary and community groups and private agencies, with almost 500 applications for funding, ranging from proposals for several thousand euro to larger projects seeking in excess of one million euro over three years.

Due to the volume of applications and the additional administrative work involved in co-ordinating and collating the proposals, the anticipated time-frame for the assessment process and the award of funding to successful proposals has had to be revised.

A panel will assess all applications based on the following criteria:

- Quality and coherence of proposal;
- Contribution to wellbeing of children and families
- Potential lasting impact
- Capacity and sustainability of providers to deliver person-centred services and comply with standards
- Value for money

A tentative date for letters to issue to successful applicants is in the week beginning 22<sup>th</sup> January 2024 and two weeks later, the process of engagement with successful applicants on the drawdown of funds will commence.

- **A National AON tender process.**

This is nearing completion to support CHOs to achieve their AON legislative targets. However, it is anticipated that this is not going to add significant additional capacity beyond what CHOs have already sourced directly with private providers. Learning from this tender process will be shared with CHOs to support standardisation across CHOs.

- **Assessment of Need Administrative Hubs**

AON Administrative Hubs are now in place in Community Healthcare Areas (CHOs) 1, 4, 5, 7, and 8.

**Assessment hubs** have been established in CHOs 3, 6 and 9. CHO 3 is utilising existing staff reassigned from CDNT service. CHO 6's hub is pending recruitment of clinical specialist posts and in interim, the AON process is outsourced to a private service provider. CHO 9 has recruited 2 of its 3 clinical specialists and recruitment of the 3<sup>rd</sup> is in train.

Yours Sincerely,



**Mr Bernard O'Regan,  
Head of Operations - Disability Services,  
Community Operations**

