



**Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,**  
Seirbhísí 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 Head of Operations,**  
National Disability Services  
First Floor- Offices 13, 14, 15  
Roselawn House, University Business Complex,  
National Technology Park,  
Castletroy,  
Limerick.

13<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Deputy Matt Carty,  
Dail Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.  
E-mail: [matt.carty@oireachtas.ie](mailto:matt.carty@oireachtas.ie)

Dear Deputy Carty,

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: 7748/24**

*To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth whether those families who are forced to source services such as OT due to lack of availability within the CDNTs will have their costs recouped by his Department; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**HSE Response**

91 Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) are aligned to 96 Community Healthcare Networks (CHNs) across the country and are providing services and supports for children with complex disabilities aged from birth to 18 years of age.

The CDNTs are currently providing services and supports for 45,741 children and strategies and supports for urgent cases on the waitlist where staffing resources allow. However, there are significant challenges for CDNTs including:

- Significant staffing vacancies
- Growth in numbers of children with complex need
- Growth in demand for Assessment of Need, diverting further resources away from interventions.

Private providers are currently being contracted by the HSE and its funded agencies to provide assessments and / or interventions. In such instances, the HSE and HSE funded agencies ensure that the contracted providers are appropriately qualified and that any assessments or interventions are



provided in line with the appropriate standards, appropriate procurement procedures, Garda vetting and due diligence practice.

Some families source private assessments to facilitate access to educational supports such as special schools or classes. In many cases, these are unidisciplinary assessments which are usually accepted in the education sector. In general, HSE or HSE funded services, in line with best practice guidelines, use a multidisciplinary approach to assessment, specifically to ASD assessment. In these circumstances, while HSE services may take cognisance of any unidisciplinary reports that may be available, they will undertake a multidisciplinary assessment where appropriate, to confirm a diagnosis and to determine the necessary interventions.

The HSE does not fund or reimburse any fees paid to private practitioners in any of the health service areas where assessments, interventions or therapies have been commissioned by the service user or their family directly.

Approximately €11.5m has been allocated to address waiting lists for clinical assessments identified through the Assessment of Need process. This funding is being utilised to procure diagnostic ASD assessments from the private sector.

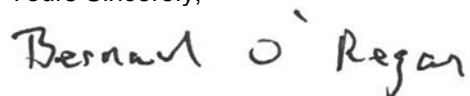
Also, the HSE at local level is using Time Related Savings to source AON assessments privately for children in the order as registered on the AOS (AON information management system), and in addition, commission ancillary supports to complement children's disability services whilst we continue working to recruit into the vacant posts. These include additional respite, complementary therapies where appropriate clinical and governance assurances are in place and capacity building initiatives for children and their families.

All of the above are interim measures for assessment and supports for waitlisted children and their families. Implementation of the *Roadmap for Service Improvement 2023 – 2026, Disability Services for Children and Young People*, including 21 staff retention and recruitment actions, is now underway.

The Roadmap is a targeted Service Improvement Programme to achieve a quality, accessible, equitable and timely service for all children with complex needs as a result of a disability and their families.

It sets out the overall aim for Children's Disability Services, provided by the HSE and its partner agencies, for every child to have a childhood of inclusive experiences where they can have fun, learn, develop interests and skills, and form positive relationships with others in a range of different settings.

Yours Sincerely,



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

