



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.

14th March 2024

Deputy Marian Harkin,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: marian.harkin@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Harkin,

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 9583/24

To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth what therapy and intervention supports are available to children who are unable to access these supports through the public disability network; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

HSE Response

National Access Policy

The National Policy on Access to Services for Children & Young People with Disability & Developmental Delay ensures that children are directed to the appropriate service based on the complexity of their presenting needs i.e. Primary Care for non-complex functional difficulties and Children's Disability Network Teams for complex functional difficulties. Children with disabilities may access supports from a Children's Disability Network Team or from Primary Care or from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) depending on the complexity of their needs.

Childrens' Disability Services

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 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.

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.

Children's Disability Services Grant Fund

Additional funding has been provided to Children's Disability Services under a new grant scheme.

The Children's Disability Services Grant Fund was open to organisations, including community groups and service providers and aims to support children who are on a waiting list for Children's Disability Network Team services.

There was 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.

A panel is assessing 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

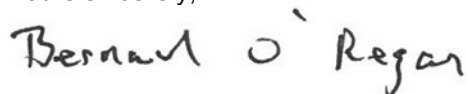
Due to a significantly larger number of submission received for the Children's Disability Services Grant Scheme than anticipated, the evaluation process has taken a lot longer to complete. It is now in its final stage and applicants will be duly notified of the outcome.

All of the above are 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 document: *Roadmap for Service Improvement 2023 – 2026, Disability Services for Children and Young People* can be accessed at:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/disability/roadmap-for-service-improvement-2023-2026.pdf>

Yours sincerely,



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