



Oifig an Stiúirthóra Náisiúnta Cúnta
Oibríochtaí Meabhairshláinte

Ospidéal Naomh Lómáin, Baile Phámar,
Baile Átha Cliath 20, D20 HK69

Office of the
Assistant National Director
Mental Health Operations

St Lomans Hospital, Palmerstown,
Dublin 20, D20 HK69

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[@hselive](https://twitter.com/hselive)

e:PQReps.NatMHOPS@hse.ie

Deputy Pauline Tully.
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

06th February 2024

PQ Number: 57307/23

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health if, in line with Action 94 of the Autism Committee's Final Report, he has plans to establish how best to create a pathway for autistic adults to access multi-disciplinary supports, including mental health interventions; and the estimated first- and full-year cost, respectively, of implementing this proposal. -Pauline Tully

Dear Deputy Tully,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

The Service Improvement Programme for the Autistic Community is currently piloting a new protocol for assessing autism and clarifying referral pathways. This work is underway across four Community Health Organisations (2, 4, 7 and 9) and incorporates integrated service provision across primary care, disability and mental health.

To date over 150 service users have already or are currently participating in this pilot, which encompasses autistic children, young people and adults, as well as the full range of disciplines involved in service provision to autistic people. Importantly this work also is promoting more timely and effective interaction between disability and mental health services.

While the capacity and effectiveness of all services are resource dependant, the new protocol seeks to more efficiently align the type of assessment undertaken with the complexity of the difficulties that people present with. In so doing it presents opportunities to use available resources more effectively rather than necessarily requiring additional resources.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

Brian J. Higgins
Assistant National Director: Head of Healthcare Strategy
Disability and Mental Health Services