



Head of Social Care
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare
Health Service Executive
Model Business Park
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Cork
Eircode: T12 HT02

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Cúram Sláinte Pobail Corcaigh Ciarraí
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4th December 2018

Mr. Billy Kelleher, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ ref 47729/18

“To ask the Minister for Health when a full-time dedicated social worker will be appointed to a school (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter.”

Details supplied: Scoil Cara, Banduff, Co. Cork

Dear Deputy Kelleher,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you have submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Scoil Cara was established in 2011 following a decision to divide Scoil Triest special school into a Junior cycle and a Senior cycle. Scoil Triest now provides special education to children with autism and mild/moderate intellectual disability aged 12 to 18 years. Scoil Cara provides special education to children with autism and mild/moderate learning disabilities aged 5 to 12 years. Both schools are under the patronage of the Brothers of Charity.

Scoil Cara is one of a number of primary schools for children with Autism in Cork. Sonas Special School in Carrigaline (ages 3-6) and Scoil Aislín on the Boreenamanna Road (ages 3-12) are also Autism Specific Primary Schools under the Department of Education and Skills. St Gabriel's Special school in Bishopstown also takes primary aged pupils who have severe to profound intellectual disability and autism but does go up to age 18.

The multidisciplinary supports provided by the Brothers of Charity Services to Scoil Cara's current cohort of pupils are:-

- 2 days Speech and Language therapy
- 2 days Occupational Therapy
- Psychology is by referral however it is 2 days Psychology at present as working on school transitions
- Physiotherapy is requested on a referral basis; the physiotherapist visits the school to deal with those specific referrals



- The school does not have a need for a nurse to be present in the school on a fulltime basis.

Scoil Cara was initially established with 30 pupils in 6 classes in 2011 when the Brothers of Charity assigned multi-disciplinary resources to the school. The school now has over 60 pupils in 10 classes. The Brothers of Charity Services has been unable to increase the level of multidisciplinary supports to the due to lack of available resources.

As the figures above show, enrolments in Scoil Cara have doubled since the school was opened in 2011. Unfortunately, limited access to additional resources in the disability sector, and the increasing numbers of children being referred for assessment for autism, has meant that there has been no opportunity to increase the resources available to the school. In line with the national policy on multi-disciplinary supports for children with disabilities, any additional resources are provided to Children Disability Teams who provide services across a geographic area rather than to a specific school.

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare area will re-configure Childrens Services in 2019 in the Cork area with the roll out Progressing Disabilities (PDS) for Children. Services in Kerry and in West Cork have already re-configured and are now structured according to the PDS model. Cork County North and Cork City will re-configure in the months ahead. The Cork city and county area will have ten Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNT's) once the reconfiguration is complete.

We are working with our partner organisations to implement '**Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People Programme (PDS)**'. The key objective of PDS is to provide equity of access to all children based on their individual need, regardless of their diagnosis, where they live or go to school. This means that a child will have the same access to services whether they live in Donegal, Dublin or Dingle.

PDS is doing this by forming partnerships between all the disability organisations in an area and pooling their staff with expertise in the different types of disabilities to form local Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) who will provide for all children with significant disability, regardless of what their disability is. It is important to note that where these teams are already in place, services are more stream-lined. There will be an allocation of 100 posts to children's disability network teams across the HSE in 2019. The Childrens Disability Network Team Managers posts for Cork and Kerry were advertised on Monday 19th November.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



**General Manager
Disability Services
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare**

