



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
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14th October 2019

Deputy Carol Nolan
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
e-mail: carol.nolan@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Nolan

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 40043/19

To ask the Minister for Health his plans to ensure 300 extra therapy staff are recruited in order to improve disability services for children; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

HSE Response

The Report on the Future Needs of Disability Services (April 2018) estimates an additional 400 posts are required to provide adequate staffing levels to meet the demand for children's disability services and the HSE is working to address this.

NSP 2019 has provided for an additional 100 new therapy posts to be implemented by end 2019 with new development funding of €2.5m granted via NSP 2019 and with a full year investment cost rising to €6m in 2020.

This welcome new resource will result in additional new therapy posts ranging from Speech and Language Therapy, OT, Physio, Social Work and Psychology. This new resource will impact on both assessment of need as well as support interventions for children with complex disability concerns.

The 100 new therapy grade posts have been allocated with discipline, grade and location now assigned in each case. Formal approval was received from Strategy and Planning on 17/5/2019 and confirmation to proceed with recruitment was sent from Community Operations to NRS on 15/07/2019. This was required to generate permissions for each CHO to progress recruitment. CHO areas are currently progressing recruitment in partnership with HBS Recruit and non-statutory employers.

The above should be considered in light of previous investment secured by the HSE for therapeutic services which has been invested in the Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People (0-18s) Programme (PDS). Since 2014, the roll out of the PDS has entailed targeted investment of €14m and the provision of 275 additional therapy staff, to increase services for children with all disabilities.

Reform of Children's Disability Services - Progressing Disability Services Policy

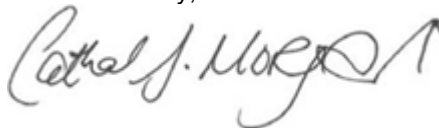
In terms of the structure of network teams providing services to children with complex disability needs, HSE is rolling out the Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People (PDS) Programme, which requires a reconfiguration of all current HSE and HSE funded children's disability services into geographically-based Children's Disability Network Teams (Early-Intervention and School-aged or 0-18 Teams). This Programme aims to achieve a national equitable approach in service provision for all children based on their individual need and regardless of their disability, where they live or where they go to school. Based on the recommendations of the Report of the National Reference Group on Multidisciplinary Services for Children aged 5-18 Years (2009), its objectives are:

- ✓ One clear pathway to services providing equity of access for all children with disabilities, according to their need.
- ✓ Effective teams working with partnership with parents and Education to support children in achieving their potential.
- ✓ Available resources used to the optimum benefit for children and their families.

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.

In tandem with Health service reform which seeks to have Health and Social Care "Networks" in place, the HSE is establishing a total of 96 Children's Disability Networks across each of the nine CHOs and comprised of Specialist Multi- Disciplinary Teams to work with complex disability needs. Each Network will have a Children's Disability Network Manager with specialist expertise in providing Childrens disability clinical services. The appointment of these Network Managers is now underway given that the interview and selection process is complete.

Yours sincerely,



**Dr. Cathal Morgan,
Head of Operations - Disability Services,
Community Operations**