



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
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22nd September 2020

Deputy David Cullinane,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House, Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
e-mail: david.cullinane@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Cullinane,

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 21134/20

To ask the Minister for Health the estimated cost of recruiting and retaining one speech and language therapist; the number needed to adequately staff health services and to identify the areas of need; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

HSE Response

The HSE is aware of the numbers of children and adults waiting for therapy services and is fully cognisant of the stress this can cause to families. One of the key priorities for the HSE is to improve waiting times for therapy services by implementing a revised model of care for children's Speech and Language Therapy services and Psychology services and develop new models for Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy services.

In addition to the significant numbers of additional posts allocated to Primary Care and to Social Care under the Progressing Children's Disabilities Programme in recent years the HSE is committed to using innovative approaches, involving public, voluntary and private providers, to achieving a targeted reduction in therapy waiting lists.

The HSE is fully committed to working in partnership with service providers to achieve maximum benefits for children with complex needs, and aims to ensure that resources available are used in the most effective manner possible.

Additional funding for Therapeutic Services across both Disability and Primary Care

NSP 2019 provided for an additional 100 new therapy posts to be implemented over 2019/ 2020. This is additional to existing resources in this area as follows:

- Investment secured by the HSE for therapeutic services 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.
- In 2013, additional funding of €20m was provided to strengthen primary care services. This comprised over €18.5m for the recruitment of over 260 primary care team posts and over €1.4m to support community intervention team development.

- There was also a €4m allocation within the 2016 Service Plan to facilitate the recruitment of Speech and Language Therapists to address waiting lists as part of the overall Speech and Language Therapy waiting list initiative within Primary Care and Social Care. The allocation provides for an additional 83 posts.
- In addition, the recruitment of a further 40 posts in Occupational Therapy (OT) commenced in Quarter 4, 2018. Currently the OT Service Improvement Working Group is reviewing options pertaining to the allocation of posts across CHO Areas. This is being done in conjunction with the findings of the OT Service Improvement report for Primary Care.

Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People (PDS)

Following the publication of the Report of the Reference group on Multidisciplinary Services for Children aged 5 – 18 years (2009), a programme entitled Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People (PDS) was established. The programme aims to achieve a national unified approach to delivering disability clinical services so that there is a clear pathway to the services needed for all children with disabilities irrespective of where they live, the school they attend and the nature of their disability.

The PDS programme seeks to reconfigure the existing children's disability services to form geographically based Children's Disability Network Services that are aligned to Community Healthcare Networks.

The HSE is establishing a total of 96 Children's Disability Networks across each of the nine CHOs comprised of Specialist Multi-Disciplinary Teams to work with children with complex disability needs. Each Network will have a Children's Disability Network Manager with specialist expertise in providing children's disability clinical services. The appointment of these managers will facilitate the establishment of the Children's Disability Network Teams in 2020.

Each Community Healthcare Organisation has well established Local Implementation Group(s) to progress the implementation of this project in their local area. These groups have developed Project Initiation Documents and Implementation Plans specific to their area. The National Community Operations – Disability Team through the National Children's Programme Oversight Group provides support to the Community Healthcare Organisations in this regard.

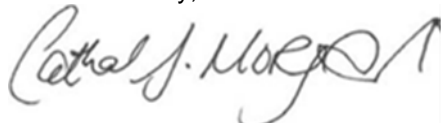
Please note that all HSE Areas planning reconfiguration continue to have significant Early Intervention and School Age Services in place, provided either directly by the HSE, or by voluntary service providers funded by the HSE, such as Enable Ireland, Kare, Muriola Foundation, St. John of God Services, Brothers of Charity Services, St. Michael's House, Cope Foundation, CRC, Daughters of Charity Services etc.

Cost of recruiting and retaining Speech and Language Therapists

The HSE estimates that approximately 30 Speech and Language Therapists (21.6 at Basic level and 8.2 at Senior level) would be needed to address overdue Assessments of Need under the Disability Act. In addition, the HSE estimates a shortfall of approximately 400 additional clinical posts for our CDNTs. In this context, we would suggest a requirement for multiannual funding to recruit additional staff. We do not have a breakdown of what grades / types of staff would be needed, therefore, it is difficult to state how many SLTs would be required, however, the costs per post are as follows:

	Salary	Employer PRSIPensions		Total	Non-Pay	Total incl non-pay	
SLT	Basic	€44,059	€4,736	€1,762	€50,558	€11,015	€61,572
	Senior	€56,695	€6,095	€2,268	€65,058	€14,174	€79,231

Yours sincerely,



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