

16th December, 2021

Mr Padraig O’Sullivan, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ ref 57689/21

“To ask the Minister for Health if he will provide details on the access to disability services for children in CHO 4; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”

Dear Deputy O’Sullivan,

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare has been requested to reply to you in the context of the above Representation, which you submitted for response.

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare reconfigured children’s disability services to Childrens Disability Network Teams under the national Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People Programme (PDS) in April 2021. PDS is a significant national change programme for the provision of services and supports for children from birth to 18 years of age, in line with Sláintecare and the Programme for Government, in order to:

- Provide a clear pathway and fairer access to services for all children with a disability
- Make the best use of available resources for the benefit of all children and their families
- Ensure effective teams are working in partnership with families and with education staff to support children with a disability to reach their full potential.

PDS aligns with two clear objectives of The Sláintecare Report to:

- Provide the majority of care at or as close to home as possible
- Create an integrated system of care with healthcare professionals working closely together.

Children’s Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) have been established to provide services and supports for all children with complex needs within a defined geographic area.

CDNTs are teams of health and social care professionals, including nursing, occupational therapy, psychology, physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, social work and

others. The team work closely together in a family centred model, focusing on the child's and family's own priorities. Every child with complex needs arising from a disability will have access to a team, regardless of the nature of their disability, where they live, or the school they attend.

There are 14 Childrens Disability Network Teams in Cork Kerry Community Healthcare, the location of each alligning with the 14 Community Healthcare Networks. Each CDNT is managed by a Lead Agency namely Cope Foundation, Brothers of Charity (BOC), Enable Ireland, Coaction and St Josephs Foundation (SJF).

Access to the Services is via the National Policy on Access to Services for Children & Young People with Disability & Developmental Delay via referrals from for example GPs, Public Health Nurses, other healthcare professionals.

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/disability/progressing-disability/pds-programme/documents/national-policy-on-access-to-services-for-disabilities-and-developmental-delay.pdf>

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNT's) are committed to the delivery of an equitable and consistent service for children with complex needs and disability in line with the principles and values of the National Programme for Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People (PDSCYP).

Our vision for all children and young people with complex needs is for them to be happy, independent, confident, connected and an active participant in family and community life.

At commencement with their CDNT each child and family will be offered as part of their Initial Pathway:

- The appointment of a Key Contact
- A PDS Information for Families presentation
- An initial assessment and Individualised Family Service Plan
- Initial assessment /IFSP document to include, when required, an Assessment of Need Summary Report
- Identification of initial intervention for each child and family to work on their priority goal(s).

The child and family Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) will determine individual and/or group pathways of intervention. The CDNM and CDNT will continually review and co-design the service requirements for children and their families attending the CDNT, taking into consideration prioritised needs as identified through the IFSP.

The model of CDNT intervention is based on a tiered model of intervention, all families, children and young people are offered and strongly encouraged to access preventative universal approaches which build skills and support families understand their child, the



child's development and how to positively support their child's development. They are proactive approaches focusing on prevention and forming the basis for further intervention. In their absence other interventions may be less effective.

Universal Interventions

Information sessions/ talks/programmes for families on particular topics related to the needs of the children within the CDNT.

Targeted Interventions

These are individual and group interventions for children who have identified similar needs e.g. PECS Training, Lámh Training, Hanen, Incredible Years.

Intense Interventions.

These are individual interventions to enable a child and family to receive one to one intervention to address a significant identified need that cannot be met by a Universal or Targeted Intervention.

It is the objective of the CDNTs to ensure that all children will have timely access to the appropriate services; however the CDNTs have experienced significant challenges since reconfiguration. Challenges include higher than predicted caseloads on each CDNT, restraints due to Covid and the HSE cyber-attack as well as finite and limited publicly funded resources assigned to each network. The HSE and the Lead Agencies managing the CDNTs remain committed to ensure a safe, quality and timely service to children with disability and their families

I trust this clarifies the situation for you.

Yours sincerely,



Majella Daly
Head of Disability Services,
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare

