



15th April 2021

Ms. Róisín Shortall, TD
Dáil Éireann
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Head of Service for Disability

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PQ 14030/21 – To ask the Minister for Health the position regarding a matter affecting a school (details attached) in Dublin 11; and if he will make a statement on the matter. – Róisín Shortall

DETAILS: - School – Scoil Chiarain Special School, St. Canice's Road, Glasnevin, Dublin 11 School roll number: 19325J. Parents are very concerned that the school will lose its occupational therapist and speech and language therapist; instead this service will be provided by HSE community services, but there will be no additional resources or staff given to the HSE to ensure the level of service is maintained for pupils of Scoil Chiarain; this is entirely unacceptable for pupils of Scoil Chiarain

Dear Deputy Shorthall

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

There is currently a small element of an Occupational Therapist and a Senior Speech and Language Therapist from Community Healthcare Organisation Dublin North City and County (CHO DNCC) who work some hours on site in Scoil Chiarain as part of delivery of health services and collaborative working with families and teachers.

Minister Rabbitte released the following statement on Friday 9th April 2021;

"I have been engaging with the HSE for a number of weeks in relation to Progressing Disability Services (PDS), which I don't doubt is the most equitable system for children with complex disability needs. Working together, we must ensure that the PDS model will deliver vital interdisciplinary supports to children with complex needs and who are attending Special Schools. It is in this context that I've asked the HSE to pause the removal of therapists from Special Schools while further engagement takes place. We need to ensure children are supported and services are delivered in the most efficient, fair and timely way, which the PDS model will deliver."

The PDS model of support and roll out of Children's Disability Networks (CDNs) in partnership with Lead Agencies is not being paused or stopped and we are committed to same being fully implemented by end Quarter 2 2021 and CHO DNCC will continue to engage with all stakeholders in an effort to progress same. As stated by the Minister the HSE has paused pending further review the removal of therapists from on site in special schools and this refers to Scoil Chiarain also.

In terms of review and reform, specific to services for children and young people with disability support needs, the HSE and our voluntary partners are committed through the PDS programme to reconfiguring our services to Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs). These teams will provide inter disciplinary, child and family centred healthcare services for children based on their presenting healthcare needs rather than diagnosis.

The National Policy on Access to Services for Children and Young People with Disability and Developmental Delay 2019 notes that children are directed to the appropriate service based on the complexity of their presenting needs rather than based on diagnosis. Many children and adults with a disability who have support needs can be effectively supported within mainstream child and adult health services. This policy provides for a single point of entry, signposting parents and referrers to the most appropriate service (Primary Care for non-complex functional difficulties and Children's Disability Network Teams for complex functional difficulties).

The relevant sections of this Access Policy are referenced below (Section 2.2.2 Geographic Areas):

- *The child's residence determines the Community Healthcare Organisation and the Children's Disability Network Service which has responsibility for the child's services.*
- *Children are seen by the Children's Disability Network Team according to their home address.*
- *Where a child attends a school or pre-school outside his or her CHO, the home address CHO remains responsible for all the child's services.*

CHO DNCC is working with the relevant stakeholders, including parents and colleagues in Education, to ensure appropriate services will continue to be provided to this group of children.

The HSE and our Lead Agency partners are working hard to ensure, all children's disability services fully reconfigure to CDNTs during Quarter 1 and 2 in 2021 in line with the National Progressing Disability Services model. CHO DNCC plan to update our education colleagues imminently with contact details for their Children's Disability Network Team Managers.

I trust this information is of assistance to you but should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Ms Olive Hanley
Head of Service for Disability