Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
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6th April 2021

Deputy Neale Richmond
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
e-mail: neale.richmond@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Richmond,

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 14798/21

To ask the Minister for Health the reason for the move from providing therapeutic services on site to delivering them in a community setting under the progressing disabilities programme; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

HSE Response

The National Policy on Access to Services for Children & Young People with Disability & Developmental Delay (December 2019) was developed in the context of restructuring delivery of services as part of the 'Progressing Disability Services for Children & Young People' Programme (PDSCYP). The objectives of the PDSCYP are as follows:

- 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.

This is a significant change programme for the provision of services and supports for children from birth to 18 years of age. As required by Government policy and as described in the 2017 Sláintecare Report, health and social care services in Ireland must be delivered in an integrated manner, as close to the person's home as possible. The fundamental organisational unit to deliver these services will be the Community Healthcare Network serving an average population of 50,000 people. To facilitate integration and to support the delivery of population based healthcare, each person's home address will determine their access to services.

As outlined in the National Policy on Access to Services for Children & Young People with Disability & Developmental Delay:

- 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.
- Where significant numbers of children with complex needs attend a special school outside of the catchment area for their Children's Disability Network Team, local arrangements whereby these children may access services from the Children's Disability Network Team nearest to that special school may be agreed. This arrangement should be clearly defined and must take full cognisance of the principles for service delivery for Children's Disability Network Teams. This arrangement does not mean that this service provision will necessarily be school based, nor does it mean that services for these children are prioritised over services for children attending mainstream school.
- Each Community Healthcare Organisation area is required to have a process in place that will consider any exceptional individual circumstances that may require a child to access an alternative Children's Disability Network Team to that determined by their home address.

Please see weblink below to access the policy.

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

As a key component of the PDSCYP programme Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNT) are being 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 occupational therapy, psychology, nursing, physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, social work and others. The team will work closely together in a family centred model, focussing on the child's and family's own priorities. Once all teams are in place, every child with complex needs will have access to a team, regardless of the nature of their disability, where they live, or the school they attend.

Children and their families will have access to the full range of services and supports of the CDNT according to their individual needs. This includes universal, targeted and specialist supports, such as individual therapeutic intervention and access to specialist consultation and assessment when needed. Supports will be provided as is feasible in the child's natural environments - their home, school and community.

As part of this programme, transition plans will be developed with families and key stakeholders to ensure a smooth and safe transition from what is often a unidisciplinary service into the multidisciplinary team over a defined period of time.

Yours sincerely,

Cathal J. Morgan

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