

11<sup>th</sup> October, 2021

Mr. Sean Sherlock, T.D.,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Dublin 2

**PQ ref 47561/21**

**“To ask the Minister for Health the number of children under 18 years of age awaiting a first time appointment since being switched to the new children's disability network team for west Cork by age, intervention type, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy in tabular form.”.**

Dear Deputy Sherlock,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare (CKCH) completed reconfiguration of children's disability services to Childrens Disability Network Teams (CDNT) under the Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People Programme (PDS) in April 2021. West Cork has been reconfigured since 2013. CoAction West Cork is the Lead Agency for the West Cork CDNT.

PDS is a significant 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 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.

The CDNT work collaboratively with the child and family to identify the needs and priorities of the child and family, plan goals and develop an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP). This is a written plan that focuses on the strengths and needs of the child and family, incorporating their priorities and concerns. 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 direct supports, such as individual therapeutic intervention and access to consultation and assessment when needed. Supports will be provided as is feasible in the child's natural environments - their home, school and community.

As one of the key principles of PDS is interdisciplinary working with the family as distinct from uni-disciplinary intervention and assessments; data regarding uni-disciplinary interventions is not gathered. The following data is gathered:

In the West Cork Network, as of 30th September 2021 there are 41 children waiting for initial contact with the CDNT. 11 of these children have been waiting less than 4 months, 30 children have been waiting between 4-8 months.

It is the objective of the CDNTs to ensure that all children newly referred will have timely access to the appropriate services; however the CDNTs have experienced significant challenges. Challenges include higher than predicted caseloads on each CDNT, reduction in service provision due to Covid, the HSE cyber-attack as well as finite and limited 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 and continue to advocate for additional resources for the team.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Yours sincerely



**Ms. Majella Daly,**  
**Head of Disability Services,**  
**Cork Kerry Community Healthcare**

