



Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,
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11th May 2022

Deputy Pauline Tully,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: pauline.tully@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Tully,

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: 18786/22

To ask the Minister for Health his views on the adequacy of the level of students currently graduating in Ireland to satisfy the staffing needs of children's disability network teams; his views on the reasons that the shortfall in therapy staff working in children's disability network teams has not been satisfied through recruitment within the European Union; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

HSE Response

In 2021, the remainder of ninety-one CDNTs were established to provide services and supports for all children with complex needs within a defined geographic area.

Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) are teams of health and social care professionals (e.g., occupational therapists, psychologists, physiotherapists, speech and language therapists, social workers) and others disciplines (e.g., nurses, family support workers, early educators). These CDNTs provide supports for children with complex disability needs. The establishment of CDNTs and the staffing mix therein was influenced by a number of factors including the staff resources of pre-existing services, the population needs and the available skill mix.

Since 2019, more than 475 development posts have been allocated to children's disability services across the country. These posts have been assigned based on a number of factors, including the existing ratio of staff to the number of children with disabilities in each area.

A CDNT Staff Census and Workforce Review undertaken in 2021 has provided valuable information on the number of staff working in the CDNTs by discipline and grade, this information will allow targeted workforce planning by Children's Disability Network Managers to reinforce the skill mix of their teams to accommodate local population need.



Most of the disciplines working in CDNTs are similar to those working in other areas of the health services including primary care services, mental health services and acute hospitals. The HSE experiences ongoing challenges recruiting staff across a range of disciplines and grades. The HSE continues to explore a range of options to support the recruitment of essential staff across all aspects of the health services.

Yours sincerely,

Bernard O'Regan

**Mr Bernard O'Regan,
Head of Operations - Disability Services,
Community Operations**

