

28th April, 2022

Ms Holly Cairns, TD.
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ ref 19575/22

“To ask the Minister for Health his plans to ensure that the disability services management in CHO4 meets with the Cork parents’ advocacy network immediately.”

Dear Deputy Cairns,

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

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare is in the first year of the full implementation of the national Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young Persons Model. Fundamental to this is the establishment of the governance structures which includes the family forums and family representation group. Cork Kerry Community Healthcare is fully committed to ensuring family participation in governance and this will be promoted through the family forums at Childrens Disability Network Team level. This ensures that there is a focus at all times on the needs of children and their families and the lived experienced.

Our aim for the first year of implementation was to transfer children and young people to the new services model and commence the delivery of interdisciplinary services as soon as possible. We have been challenged in delivering the service due to a number of factors including the availability of staff resources to manage the numbers of children on each team, the on-going impact of the pandemic as well as recruitment challenges which is being experienced across the entire health service. In spite of the above challenges the predominant focus continues to be on providing direct access to services for children and families but unfortunately this is restricted due to the staff resources and high demand for services.

Furthermore, some of the initiatives that we had endeavoured to commence earlier including the family forums have been delayed due to the on-going challenges. However we would hope to commence implementation of these during 2022.

There will be one family forum per team. They will provide an opportunity for families to discuss general issues and ideas about the children’s disability services in the team. If a family has an issue or complaint about their own child’s service, they should raise this with the team or with the CDNM.

The Terms of Reference are outlined below:

1. To involve families in the development of children's disability services in their local CDN through:

- The expression of ideas for future service development and improve existing services
- Identification of issues and ideas for service development and/or enhancement

2. To elect two Family Representatives who will meet the CDNM regarding Network issues and ideas raised by the Family Forum, and will join the Family Representative Group at area level.

3. To share information on:

- Service provision, governance and access
- Community supports
- Rights of the child and the family
- Other relevant topics of interest

4. To facilitate networking and sharing knowledge and experiences amongst families.

The membership can be family members and carers of children and young people attending a Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT). The family forum will meet twice a year. The CDNM will manage and coordinate the logistics of the Family Forum and a facilitator for the forums will be identified.

You will appreciate that this takes a high level of resource which is currently taken up with the provision of direct service delivery. However, we will be in contact with families as soon as the teams are in a position to commence this initiative.

I trust this clarifies the situation for you.

Yours sincerely,



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

