



Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,
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6th 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: 20204/22

To ask the Minister for Health the status of the initiatives he is taking to strengthen children's disability services in 2022; the funding being provided for same; 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.

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., nursing). The reconfiguration into CDNTs and the resultant staffing mix was influenced by a number of factors including the staff resources of existing services and the expressions of interest process. Hence, some CDNTs may have other disciplines such as nurses, family support workers or early educators.

Regardless of the nature of their disability, where they live, or the school they attend, every child with complex needs and their families have access to the full range of family centred services and supports of their 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 are provided as is feasible in the child's natural environments - their home, school and community.

With regard to strengthening Children's Disability Services, 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.

Included in the 475 posts referenced above, the NSP 2022 provides for 190 therapy posts at a cost of €8.2m in 2022, increasing to €14.4m in 2023. This is a further substantial increase in the provision of funding in support of the development of the Children's Disability Network Teams, building on the 185 posts provided for in 2021.



The table below provides detail regarding the number of development posts by whole-time equivalent allocated to CDNTs in 2019, 2021 and 2022. Each CHO with their Lead Agencies decide the allocation of these posts by discipline, grade and team based on analysis of service demands, staffing and competency gaps and risk assessment for each team. The full allocation for 2022 has not yet been agreed, so only those posts that have been allocated are included here.

CDNT Development Posts			
	2019	2021	2022
CHO1	12	15.7	11
CHO2	3.5	15.5	5
CHO3	12	13.4	4
CHO4	6	13.3	14.5
CHO5	15	16	26
CHO6	3.5	32.32	4
CHO7	13	26.6	24.5
CHO8	19	14.95	23.5
CHO9	16	39.55	17.5
Specialist Services			18.5
Total	100	187.32	148.5

A staffing census of the Children’s Disability Network Teams will provide a comprehensive overview of all staff, on all the CDNTs including details of their discipline and grade. This information will inform a workforce plan for the sector.

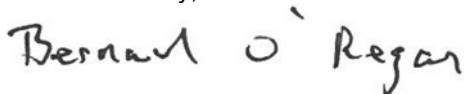
The additional posts provided for under the National Service Plans for 2021 and 2022 are intended to support the newly established CDNTs to prioritise intervention for children with complex needs.

Recruitment remains a challenge across all areas in the health sector which is compounded by limited availability of therapists in the employment market at this time. However the HSE and its lead agency partners are continuously working to recruit staff for children’s disability network services, including scoping with Government additional strategies to recruiting staff to CDNTs.

An extensive National Team Development Programme was developed and delivered online by the HSE in partnership with its Lead Agencies over 2020 – 2021 to prepare the 91 Children’s Disability Network Managers and their staff for the establishment of their CDNTs and development of child and family centred services. In 2022, the HSE will provide an additional programme of support to all managers and their teams on strengthening their family centred practices to ensure that services and supports provided are based on priorities identified by the each family specific to their child.

Working is ongoing on mapping specialised services and supports, and paediatric supports available and gap analysis for children with highly complex needs, in order to develop standardised approaches to integrated pathways of support for CDNTs and Primary Care staff.

Yours Sincerely,



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

