



10<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Deputy Duncan Smith,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

Email: [duncan.smith@oireachtas.ie](mailto:duncan.smith@oireachtas.ie)

**PQ 20428/22**

To ask the Minister for Health the services that are currently being provided from a centre (details supplied) as part of the progressive disability programme; the current staffing levels for this service; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

**DETAILS: Balbriggan Primary Care Centre**

Dear Deputy Smith,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you with information in the context of the above Representation which you submitted for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

The Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNT) were established in Community Healthcare Organisation Dublin North City & County (CHO DNCC) on 20th September 2021. It is a very significant change programme with a new model of service which focuses on outcomes for children and families rather than inputs. An interdisciplinary team will work with each family to develop an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) and support children and parents to reach goals identified on the plan. The focus is on the goals that children and families may meaningfully aim to achieve at home and steps they may take together with the Children's Disability Network Team rather than the number of sessions of therapies like speech and language.

**The current staffing levels at the end of March 2022 for the Balbriggan CDNT is as follows:**

No. of staff WTE allocation	24.6
No. of staff WTE actually working at month end	8.3
No. of staff WTE on maternity leave at month end	2
Vacancies	16.3

Our CDNTs are experiencing significant challenges in terms of recruitment and retention of staff at all grades. The Children's Disability Network Team Governance Group is exploring if there are any alternative staff grades or qualifications which may assist staff in CDNTs whilst they navigate the significant change within service delivery. The level of staff vacancies is not easily resolved as there are essentially more posts for Allied Health Professionals than qualified staff available nationally. We have also recently increased the level of administrative support to assist each team.

The Central Remedial Clinic (CRC) as lead agency for the Balbriggan CDNT has run a number of recruitment campaigns to try and fill the vacancies on this team and I have detailed these as follows:

Speech and Language therapy – staff grade x 3	Two candidates shortlisted but declined interview – Posts re-advertised
Social Work – staff grade	Two candidates declined offers – To be re-advertised
Dietician – senior	Offer Declined
Physio – staff grade	Commenced post 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2022
Occupational therapy – staff grade	Candidate accepted, at pre-employment stage
Psychologist – senior x 2	Campaign closed, applications to be shortlisted and interviewed
Physio – senior mat leave	Campaign Advertised - no applicants. Post to be readvertised.
Occupational therapy – senior mat leave	Campaign closed. Applications to be shortlisted and interviewed
Home support	Post offered to panel - candidate declined. To be re-advertised
Additional Admin support	Recently approved – advertised
Children’s Disability Manager – Mat Leave	Post offered to panel - candidate declined. To be re-advertised

I assure you that we are continuing to work towards improved access to services with a focus on rolling out universal and targeted care pathways for children and families.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,




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**Ms Olive Hanley**  
**Head of Service for Disability**