



**Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,**  
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,  
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21<sup>st</sup> December 2022

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Dear Deputy Tully,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the following parliamentary questions, which were submitted to this department for response.

**PQ: 62588/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question No. 1071 of 8 November 2022, if he will report on the success or otherwise of the international recruitment campaign with respect to recruits for children's disability network teams; if he will report on the size of the expansion of panels for occupational therapists, psychologists, physiotherapists and speech and language therapists in November 2022, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**PQ: 62624/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health if he will provide this Deputy with the Children's Disability Network Team Staff Census and Workforce Review 2022; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**HSE Response**

Since 2019, more than 610 development posts have been allocated to children's disability services across the country. These posts have been assigned to teams based on a number of factors, including the existing ratio of staff to the number of children with disabilities in each area. This figure includes 190 posts provided in 2022 as well as an additional 136.3 WTEs to restore pre-existing services in 104 special schools.

These additional posts are intended to support the newly established CDNTs to prioritise intervention for children with complex needs in special schools.

**Recruitment and Retention**

The HSE and Lead Agencies are operating in a very competitive global market for healthcare talent as there are significant shortages of qualified healthcare professionals across the globe.



In partnership with our CDNT Lead Agencies, we continue to explore a range of options to enhance the recruitment and retention of essential staff into our CDNTs. In addition, the HSE Community Operations Disability Services is working collaboratively with our partnering Lead Agencies to promote CDNTs as a workplace of choice in a competitive employment market.

The lead agencies and the number of teams they lead are: HSE (41 teams), Enable Ireland (20 teams), Avista (formerly Daughters of Charity - 4 teams) Brothers of Charity (6 teams), Central Remedial Clinic (5 teams), St. Michael's House (4 teams), Cope Foundation (3 teams), St. Gabriel's (2 teams), St. Josephs Foundation (2 teams), Stewarts Care (2 teams), with CoAction West Cork and KARE leading 1 team each. Each lead agency is responsible for recruitment of staff on their CDNTs and is using a variety of approaches to fill funded vacancies. Each agency has on-going rolling recruitment to address a range of vacancies including short term temporary posts, full time permanent posts, development posts, part time posts etc. CDNTs and Lead Agencies report on the number of vacancies rather than the number of staff appointed.

Options to support the recruitment of staff for the CDNTs currently being progressed include:

- Targeted National Recruitment for CDNTs
- Targeted International Recruitment for CDNTs with an agreed relocation allowance
- Sponsorship Programme for therapy grades

In addition, the following options are being explored:

- Apprentice Programme for therapy grades
- Employment of graduates as therapy assistants as they await CORU registration
- Expansion of therapy assistants in the system with HSE supporting individuals to return to education to qualify as therapists.

The HSE has launched International Recruitment campaigns for qualified healthcare professionals. To support these international campaigns, the HSE is working in partnership with CORU, the regulator, and government departments to maximise this pool. In addition, some of the CDNT Lead Agencies are also progressing International Recruitment.

Some CHO Areas report that staff from outside the European Union have been successful at interview recently. However, the pre-clearance stage to appointment time frame can take a number of weeks and is heavily dependent on a number of factors including the candidate returning documentation in a timely manner, the requirement in some cases for overseas clearances or visas, return of references and notice period to be worked. Pre-clearances can take a minimum of 2 weeks (if all documentation is submitted as requested), however it can take significantly longer if provision of the aforementioned documentation is delayed. It should also be noted that some candidates may be available for an immediate start with other candidates having to provide notice to a current employer. This will impact the time to hire.

Some further points to note in relation to recruitment and retention of CDNT staff include the following:

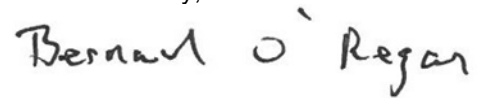
- There are panels in place for occupational therapists, psychologists, physiotherapists, and speech and language therapists.
- National Disability Operations is currently reviewing the area of Assistant Therapy Grades.
- A comprehensive Team Development Programme 2020/2021 has been provided for CDNTs and cascaded to all team members. This programme, which was designed to support the establishment of the new CDNTs and the implementation of the new model of service, will also support staff retention. All resources from this Programme are available online for CDNTs
- An extensive CDNT Training and Development Programme 2022/2023 has been launched. This is supported with dedicated funding and based on the current competency gaps identified and prioritised by the National CDNT Forum. The HSE and Lead Agencies are committed to providing ongoing training and development supports for CDNT staff supporting their professional development and retention.



- A secure site for CDNMs and their staff has been set up on Basecamp to facilitate sharing of training and development resources as well as clinical and service resources.

The report of the 2022 CDNT Staff Census and Workforce Review is being finalised and will be available in early January 2023.

Yours sincerely,



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

