



22<sup>nd</sup> February 2022

Mr Alan Farrell, TD  
Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2

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**PQ ref 5920/22**

To ask the Minister for Health the breakdown of the 13 roles unfulfilled within the children's disability network team in Swords, County Dublin; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Farrell,

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

**Current posts unfulfilled following the recruitment process on the Swords Children's Disability Network Team**

Occupational Therapy	1 Staff Grade WTE
Speech & Language Therapy	0.5 Senior WTE 2 staff grade WTE
Social work	2 Staff Grade WTE
Psychology	0.5 Senior WTE 1.5 staff grade WTE
Home support	1 WTE

**Vacant posts as a result of current or future maternity leave**

Senior Psychology	1 WTE
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All disability services within Community Healthcare Organisation Dublin North City and County (CHO DNCC) are experiencing significant recruitment challenges on Children's Disability Network Teams. Since reconfiguration in September 2021, there are on average 75 vacancies across the 12 teams and certain Networks such as Balbriggan, Blanchardstown, Blakestown and Swords are more impacted by these vacancies. These are also the Networks with high rate of referrals and waiting lists. We have established a Recruitment and Retention working group, chaired by our Head of Human Resources with the Lead Agencies responsible for the delivery of Children's Disability Network Services (Avista, St. Michael's House, and Central Remedial Clinical) to support the CEO's of the responsible Lead Agencies to explore recruitment initiatives, including international recruitment.



Concurrently our Head of Service Disability Olive Hanley chairs a CHO DNCC Governance Group overseeing CDNTs, and this 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 increased the level of administrative support to these teams to ensure that our qualified therapists are doing work appropriate to their qualifications rather than administrative tasks. The teams are experiencing high levels of maternity leave as the team demographic largely consists of young female Health and Social Care Professionals in this area. In this regard and in an effort to mitigate the risk, Ms Hanley has agreed with the CEOs of the Lead Agencies to approve the backfill of maternity leave which is not resourced within the allocated budget and Inter Agency Agreement for delivery of children's services in CDNTs.

I trust this information is of assistance to you but should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact this office.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jillian Connolly', written over a horizontal line.

**Ms Jillian Connolly**  
**Acting Head of Service for Disability**