



**Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,**  
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,  
31-33 Sráid Chaitríona, Luimneach.

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3<sup>rd</sup> August 2022

Deputy Pádraig O'Sullivan,  
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Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
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Dear Deputy O'Sullivan,

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: 40613/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health the number of children's disability network teams per CHO; the number of posts in each; the number of vacancies in each; the number of posts advertised for the years 2019, 2020 and 2021, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**PQ: 40536/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health his plans to ensure that all positions within the children's disability network teams are filled and that there are no staffing gaps; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**HSE Response**

The HSE acknowledges the challenges in meeting the demand for children's disability services and is acutely conscious of how this impacts on children and their families. An additional 190 posts have been allocated this year to Children's Disability Services in addition to the 185 posts in 2021, which will support the implementation of family centred services across all CDNTs. These additional posts are intended to support the newly established CDNTs to prioritise intervention for children with complex needs.

In 2021, the remainder of ninety-one multidisciplinary CDNTs were established in 96 Network areas 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.

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.

The table below provides detail regarding the number of development posts by whole-time equivalent allocated to CDNTs in 2019, 2021 and 2022. The Children's Disability Networks Governance Group at CHO level, decided the allocation of these posts by discipline and team in line with the governance procedures for CDNTs. The full allocation for 2022 has not yet been agreed, so only those posts that have been allocated are included here.

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

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

A Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT) Staff Census and Workforce Review was undertaken in October 2021 and a final report has been issued to the Department of Health and relevant stakeholders. This report has provided valuable information on the number of staff working in the CDNTs by discipline and grade and staff vacancies at a point in time. Vacancies continue to be tracked monthly.

Please see copy of the attached report for your information. This gives the information that you are requesting and also gives the number of CDNTs in each Community Healthcare Area and their local area.

The overall vacancy rate at the time of this staff census was 28%.

The information from the Census Report is supporting targeted workforce planning by the HSE in consultation with the CDNT Lead Agencies to reinforce the skill mix of their teams to accommodate local population need. Each CDNT is managed by a Lead Agency. The detail regarding the lead agencies and the number of teams they manage is provided below. Each lead agency is responsible for recruiting staff when vacancies arise on their teams or when development posts are allocated to their teams.

<b>Lead Agency</b>	<b>No. of CDNTs</b>
HSE	41
Enable Ireland	20
Brothers of Charity	6
Central Remedial Clinic	5
Avista (Daughters of Charity)	4
St Michael's House	4
Cope Foundation	3
St Gabriel's	2
St Joseph's Foundation	2
Stewarts Care	2
CoAction West Cork	1



Kare	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>

Most of the disciplines working in CDNTs are similar to those working in other areas of the health services including Primary Care Services, Mental Health Services, Older Person Services and Acute Hospitals. The HSE and the various Lead Agencies experience ongoing challenges recruiting staff across a range of disciplines and grades.

The HSE continues to explore a range of options to enhance the recruitment and retention of essential staff across all aspects of the health services. In addition, the HSE is working collaboratively with the CDNT Lead Agencies at CHO level to market CDNTs as an employer of choice in a competitive employment market. Each lead agency is responsible for recruitment of staff on their CDNTs and is using a variety of approaches to fill funded vacancies.

With regard to recruitment, vacancies are advertised in the usual manner by the HSE and the Lead agencies for the CDNTs.

For public sector posts, please see: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/jobs/> and <https://publicjobs.ie/en/>  
The Lead Agencies also advertise separately via their websites.

Options regarding the recruitment of staff for the CDNTs being explored in the first instance include:

- Targeted National Recruitment for CDNTs
- Targeted International Recruitment for CDNTs with the possibility of a relocation allowance
- Sponsorship Programme
- 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 Community Operations, Disability Services is actively developing business propositions for approval by HSE National Human Resource Services

A comprehensive PDS national team development programme has been provided for CDNMs and cascaded to all team members. This programme, which was designed to support the establishment of the new CDNTs and to support the implementation of the new model of service, will also support staff retention.

Yours Sincerely,



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

