



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

Office of the Head of Operations,
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5th August 2022

Deputy Holly Cairns,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: holly.cairns@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Cairns,

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 40794/22

To ask the Minister for Health the staffing to caseload ratios used to calculate the numbers, types and scale of therapists and clinicians required for each children's disability network team; the regularity with which these ratios are reviewed; and the processes that are in place to reconfigure services according to local needs.

PQ 40795/22

To ask the Minister for Health if exit interviews are conducted with therapists leaving children's disability network team; if so, if the information from these interviews was anonymously collated; the primary reasons that are cited for leaving children's disability network team; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

HSE Response

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

With regard to staffing to caseload ratios in each children's disability network team, while we don't have this information available by CDNT, we can provide the information by CHO based on the number of approved posts at the time of the staff census in Oct '21 (see Table 1 below).

Table 1

CHO	CWD*	Networks	Staffing**	Ratio
1	3,600	7	161.49	22.29
2	3,916	9	218.55	17.92
3	3,369	7	168.27	20.02
4	5,899	14	277.92	21.23
5	4,603	12	168.15	27.38
6	3,091	7	174.75	17.69
7	6,029	11	232.82	25.9
8	6,065	12	255.59	23.73
9	5,095	12	241.24	21.12
Total	41,668	91	1898.78	21.94
CWD*	Calculated based on 3.5% of child pop (2016)			
Staffing**	Approved posts as per 2021 staff census			

Staff on CDNTS may be employed by the HSE or by one of the Section 38 or Section 39 partner organisations. All staff on the CDNTs report to a Children's Disability Network Manager who is employed by one of the eleven Lead Agencies. Each employer and lead agency will have their own distinct HR processes. While the HSE encourages the CDNMs to conduct exit interviews with staff, the information arising from these interviews is not collated nationally.

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 experiences 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.

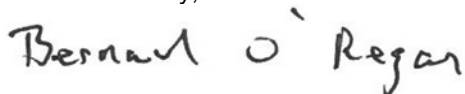
Options regarding the recruitment of staff, including psychologists, for the CDNTs being explored in the first instance include:

- 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**