



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

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10<sup>th</sup> August 2022

Deputy David Cullinane,  
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Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.  
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Dear Deputy Cullinane,

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: 41767/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question No. 624 of 5 July 2022, the targeted domestic recruitment campaigns which are in place to hire staff for children's disability network teams; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**PQ: 41768/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question No. 625 of 5 July 2022, the targeted international recruitment campaigns that are in place to hire staff for children's disability network teams; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**PQ: 41769/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question No. 626 of 5 July 2022, if he is considering introducing a sponsorship programme for children's disability network teams; the way that such a programme would work; the estimated cost of rolling out such a programme; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**PQ: 41770/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question No.628 of 5 July 2022, if he is considering the use of a relocation allowance to support any international recruitment campaigns aimed at filling vacant posts for children's disability network teams; the estimated cost of providing such an allowance; 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.

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.

Work is ongoing on mapping specialised services and supports, 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.

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.

A comprehensive PDS national team development programme 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 to support the implementation of the new model of service, will also support staff retention.

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 include:

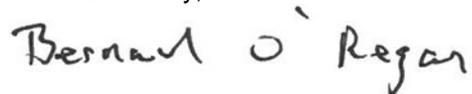
- Targeted National Recruitment for CDNTs
- Targeted International Recruitment for CDNTs with the possibility of a relocation allowance
- Sponsorship Programme
- Apprentice Programme for therapy grades
- Employment of graduates as therapy assistants as they await CORU registration
- Expansion of therapy 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.

The HSE have approved an attractive and competitive relocation package for the international recruitment of all disciplines. The relocation packages include allowances payable to candidates to meet the initial cost for relocating, such as an accommodation and flight allowance up to €4,156 for EU/UK candidates and €5,506 for non EU candidates.

Additional other costs such as registration fees to Regulatory bodies, visa fees, aptitude test fees, etc. are also payable on behalf of the candidate. The exact cost is dependent on where the candidate is relocating from, the discipline, speciality of the post and any relevant framework conditions applicable.

Yours Sincerely,



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

