



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

**Office of the Head of Operations,**  
Disability Services/Social Care Division,  
31-33 Catherine Street, Limerick.

T: 00353 (0) 61 483369  
Suíomh Gréasáin/Website: <http://www.hse.ie>

21<sup>st</sup> June 2022

Deputy Pauline Tully,  
Dail Eireann,  
Leinster House, Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.  
E-mail: [pauline.tully@oireachtas.ie](mailto:pauline.tully@oireachtas.ie)

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: 30220/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health the number of children with disabilities in each CHO area in tabular form; the number of children with disabilities assigned to each of the 91 children's disability network teams in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**PQ: 30221/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health the ratio of clinical therapy staff to children with disabilities in each children's disability network team in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**PQ: 30223/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health the number of clerical administrative support staff in each children's disability network team; the ratio of clinical therapy staff to clerical administrative support staff; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**PQ: 30224/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health with reference to Parliamentary Question No. 1580 of 26 April 2022, the details of the additional strategies that are being scoped with Government to recruit staff to children's disability network teams; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

**PQ: 30225/22**

*To ask the Minister for Health the number of the clinical therapy posts referenced by the Minister of State for Disability at the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Disability Matters on 2 May 2022 that are filled to date; 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 parallel, the recently published Department of Health Waiting List Action Plan provides for funding to address community waiting lists for children.

### Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs)

In 2021, the remainder of ninety-one multidisciplinary CDNTs were established to provide services and supports for all children with complex needs within a defined geographic area.

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, and paediatric supports available and gap analysis for children with highly complex needs, 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. As of May 1st, the national average vacancy across teams is 30.85%. This information is supporting targeted workforce planning by the HSE in consultation with the Children's Disability Network Managers to reinforce the skill mix of their teams to accommodate local population need.

The ratio of therapy / clinical to administration / management filled WTE is 6:1.

The table below is taken from the Staff Census and Workforce Review Report and gives the information collated in the report regarding the number of clerical administrative support staff in each Community Healthcare Area.

#### Administration

CHO	Approved WTE	Filled WTE	Vacant WTE	% Filled	% Vacant
CHO1	13.11	11.60	1.51	88%	12%
CHO2	15.13	11.10	4.03	73%	27%
CHO3	19.64	17.14	2.50	87%	13%
CHO4	17.75	17.59	0.16	99%	1%
CHO5	10.02	8.62	1.40	86%	14%
CHO6	9.85	8.05	1.80	82%	18%
CHO7	10.63	8.30	2.33	78%	22%
CHO8	22.20	19.90	2.30	90%	10%
CHO9	10.80	9.60	1.20	89%	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>129.13</b>	<b>111.90</b>	<b>17.23</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>13%</b>

The HSE will be working with Lead Agencies to implement a ratio of 5:1 therapy / clinical to administration / management between 2022 – 2023 to reduce the time spent by clinicians / therapists on administrative duties thereby maximising the therapy hours available for direct service provision with children and their families.

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 progress recruitment initiatives for these teams. 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 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.

**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 HSE is actively developing business propositions for National Human Resource Services to sign off.

**National Information Management System for the CDNTs (CDNTIMS)**

The newly established CDNTs are currently providing services for children in prioritised groups while also validating their new caseloads.

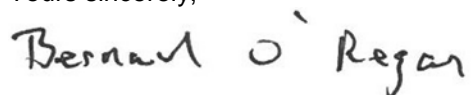
Data regarding the validated caseloads on each team is not currently available. However, it is accepted that 3.5% of children present with complex needs that will require support via an interdisciplinary CDNT. The table below provides this figure for each Community Healthcare Organisation area.

December 2022

<b>CHO</b>	<b>Children with Complex Needs</b>
<b>1</b>	3,600
<b>2</b>	3,916
<b>3</b>	3,369
<b>4</b>	5,899
<b>5</b>	4,603
<b>6</b>	3,091
<b>7</b>	6,029
<b>8</b>	6,065
<b>9</b>	5,095
<b>Total</b>	<b>41,667</b>

Information regarding the numbers of children with disabilities in each CHO area is not collated. A National Management Information System for all 91 CDNTs is in development and when implemented, will provide current data on will provide current data on caseloads and waiting lists for all CDNTs waiting lists for all CDNTs.

Yours sincerely,



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

