



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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29th June 2022

Deputy Pauline Tully,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: 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 question, which was submitted to this department for response.

PQ: 32916/22

To ask the Minister for Health the number of professionals (details supplied) who were based within a school setting in the past five years prior to the introduction of children's disability network teams; the number of each of these therapy posts that are currently based within a school setting; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

(Details supplied) speech and language therapist; ·occupational therapist; ·physiotherapist

HSE Response

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.

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. The CDNTs do not collect data on the number of supports provided in each setting.

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.

All CDNTs will provide supports for children with complex needs regardless of their diagnosis, where they live or where they go to school. School based supports will be provided where appropriate.

It is estimated that there are approximately 50,000 children with complex disability needs in the Republic of Ireland. A small proportion of these children attend special schools. 85 posts approved in mid-2021 were allocated to support services in thirty three special schools that had on-site therapy services prior to the establishment of CDNTs in 2021. Less than 2,500 children were enrolled in these special schools. The staff



recruited to these posts report to the Children's Disability Network Manager and are part of the local CDNT. The posts include occupational therapists, physiotherapists, psychologists, social workers and speech & language therapists. Children attending the thirty three special schools in question will receive their services in the school or in other settings as appropriate. While on-site services will be provided in the schools as appropriate, CDNT staff are not based in special schools.

More recently, Deputy Anne Rabbitte, Minister for Disability requested a further evaluation of the posts assigned to special schools prior to the establishment of CDNTs. The HSE is currently validating this information and will provide a report to Minister Rabbitte as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bernard O'Regan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a clear 'O' and 'R'.

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

