



23rd March 2022

Ms. Verona Murphy
Dail Eireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ 13440/22

To ask the Minister for Health the current staffing vacancies within each of the children's disability network teams in New Ross, Enniscorthy, Wexford and Gorey in County Wexford; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Murphy,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which was submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

I have reviewed the matter and the following is the current position.

Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) were established in South East Community Healthcare (CHO5) on 27th September 2021 and as such CHO5 is in the early stages of the reconfiguration process. It is a very significant change programme with a new service model which focuses on outcomes for children and families. An inter-disciplinary team will work closely together with the child and family to identify their needs and priorities and agree a plan (Individual Family Service Plan - IFSP) to support children and parents to reach goals identified on the plan. The focus of this new programme is not on the number of therapy sessions received i.e. speech and language or occupational therapy, but on the goals that children and families may meaningfully aim to achieve and steps they may take together with the Children's Disability Network Team.

In the Wexford area, Children who were identified as having complex needs were transferred to the four Children's Disability Network Teams (New Ross, Gorey, Enniscorthy and Wexford) based on their addresses.

I can confirm that SECH CHO5 has received additional posts for Children's Disability Services to help address long waiting times. As well as approving 9 new posts across SECH in 2021 the HSE has approved 26 new posts for SECH in 2022. The HSE are actively recruiting to fill these posts along with trying to fill current vacancies which will enable teams to increase the provision of assessment and intervention.

As with other areas all disability services within CHO SECH are experiencing significant recruitment challenges to Children's Disability Network Teams. Across the four Wexford CDNTs there are 15 staffing vacancies (within OT, Psychology, Dietetic, Physiotherapy, Speech & Language and Nursing posts). Vacant posts have been advertised and in some cases re-advertised



however we have been unsuccessful in filling vacancies from these campaigns. In addition the HSE/SECH continues to express posts out to current national panels.

The HSE/SECH and National Disabilities are reviewing all options to address the current vacancies as quickly as possible.

In the meantime, the Children's Disability Network Managers are also exploring different ways to offer support to children and families currently waiting to access services. This includes developing webinars, group based workshops, information sessions and the development of a repository of resources for children and their families to promote and enable wellbeing at home.

I assure you, my team and I will continue to work towards improved access to services with a focus on rolling out universal and targeted care pathways for children and families.

I trust this information is of assistance to you. Should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Anne Ennis', written over a horizontal dotted line.

Ms. Anne Ennis
Head of Service – Disability Services
South East Community Healthcare