



23<sup>rd</sup> March 2022

Ms. Verona Murphy T.D.  
Dail Eireann  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2

**PQ 13442/22**

**To ask the Minister for Health the number of occupational therapists currently employed as part of the children's disability network teams in County Wexford; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

**PQ 13443/22**

**To ask the Minister for Health the current number of children awaiting an appointment with an occupational therapist in the children's disability network team in County Wexford; the period of time that each child has been waiting for an occupational therapy appointment; 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 Questions, which were submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

*I have reviewed the matter and the following composite reply is the current position.*

Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) were established in South East Community Healthcare (CHO5) on 27<sup>th</sup> 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 with the child and family to identify specific 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.

**Staffing**

There are three Occupational Therapists (Senior and Staff Grade) currently in post across the Wexford CDNTs. A total of nine Occupational Therapists WTE, comprising Senior and Basic Grades, have been approved for Wexford. However as with other areas, the HSE is experiencing significant



staffing recruitment challenges at this time which are impacting on service delivery. The HSE/SECH and National Disabilities are reviewing all options to address the current vacancies as quickly as possible.

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.

There is a recruitment campaign for South East Community Healthcare due to be advertised on the HSE website imminently with a closing date by the end March 2022.

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 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 black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Ennis', written over a light blue horizontal line.

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**Ms. Anne Ennis**  
**Head of Service, Disability Service**  
**South East Community Healthcare**