



25th May 2022

Mr Alan Farrell, TD,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2

Email: alan.farrell@oireachtas.ie

PQ ref 23516/22

'To ask the Minister for Health the number of children waiting for children's disability network team appointments in Dublin Fingal; and if he will make a statement on the matter.' **Alan Farrell TD**

Dear Deputy Farrell,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you with information in the context of the above Parliamentary Question which you submitted for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

The Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNT) were established in Community Healthcare Organisation Dublin North City and County (CHO DNCC) on 20th September 2021 as part of the Progressing Disability Services (PDS) programme. It is a very significant change programme with a new model of service which focuses on outcomes for children and families rather than inputs.

Based on our latest figures there are currently 1,596 children on the CDNTs waiting lists in CHO DNCC Fingal area. The following table provides a breakdown of these waiting lists up to the end of April 2022:

	Swords	Balbriggan	Blanchardstown	Blakestown	Coastal
No. of children waiting 0-3 months for an initial contact	11	55	6	7	4
No. of children waiting 4-6 months for an initial contact	15	45	13	21	8
No. of children waiting 6-12 months for an initial contact	66	36	29	49	16
No. of children waiting over 12 months for an initial contact	281	341	180	327	86
Total no. children waiting for initial contact at end of April 2022	373	477	228	404	114

CHO DNCC Disability Services have significant concerns regarding access to services for some CDNTs. We are continually exploring all options available to us to address this and to improve the access to services for children and their families. We are acutely aware of the high demand for services in our CHO. This demand for services is caused by a number of factors, including but not limited to significant population growth coupled with some vulnerable population groups and areas of deprivation.

Disability Services is a highly regulated sector, with services required to comply with legislative obligations as well as numerous policy documents which require implementation. CDNTs are mandated to comply with the provisions of the Disability Act 2005 and this must be their priority when providing services.

Our CDNTs are experiencing significant challenges in terms of recruitment and retention of staff at all grades. The Children's Disability Network Team Governance Group is exploring if there are any alternative staff grades or qualifications which may assist staff in CDNTs whilst they navigate the significant change within service delivery. The level of staff vacancies is not easily resolved as there are essentially more posts for Allied Health Professionals than qualified staff available nationally. We have also increased the level of administrative support to assist each team.

I assure you that we are continuing 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.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Olive Hanley". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Ms Olive Hanley
Head of Service for Disability